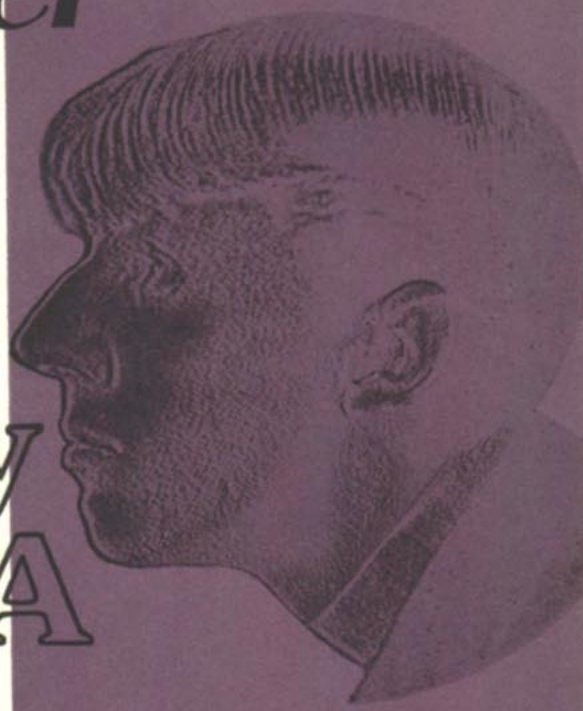
Encounter

27/4

Aubrey Beardsley at the V&A



D J Gordon

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CHICAGO, ILL. 60615

Doves, Hawks and Polls
Seymour Martin Lipset

Some Letters
Wallace Stevens

Lamina 96 (story)
Ralph Robin

Poems
Theodore Roethke
Robert Conquest

The Politics of Disarmament
Lord Chalfont

The BM "Private Case"
Peter Fryer

The Intellectual Left
Francis Hope

Foxe as Propagandist
Frances Yates

edited by
Melvin J Lasky
& Frank Kermode

October 1966 4s $1

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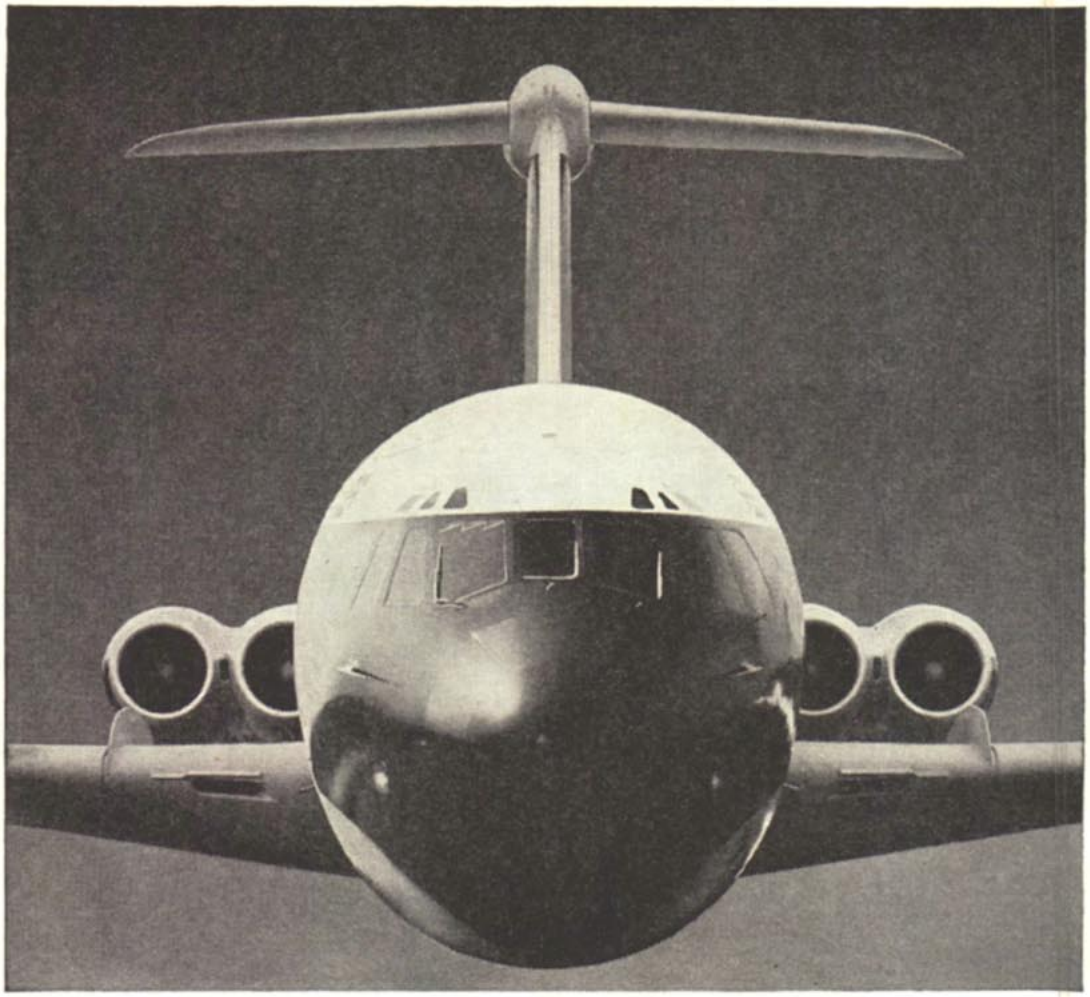

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Encounter

OCTOBER 1966
VOL. XXVII NO. 4

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MARK LANE

RUSH TO JUDGMENT

A CRITIQUE OF THE WARREN COMMISSION'S ENQUIRY INTO THE MURDERS OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY, OFFICER J. D. TIPPIT AND LEE HARVEY OSWALD

INTRODUCTION BY HUGH TREVOR-ROPER

'In an argument of devastating, cumulative force, Mr Lane demonstrates that in case after case the Commission ignored or twisted the evidence before it, in order to reach a pre-ordained conclusion.' CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

'I believe this exhaustive and unchallengeable book to be a great historical document.' BERTRAND RUSSELL

'. . . indeed disturbing . . . unsettling . . . alarming.' *Newsweek* 42*s*

Bodley Head

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D. J. Gordon

Aubrey Beardsley at the V. & A.

Testimony

It is most interesting to note, too, that though Mr. Beardsley has drawn his motives from every age, and founded his styles—for it is quite impossible to say what his style may be—on all schools, he has not been carried back into the fifteenth century, or succumbed to the limitations of Japan; he has recognised that he is living in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and he has availed himself of mechanical reproduction for the publication of his drawings, which the Japs and the Germans would have accepted with delight had they but known of it.

JOSEPH PENNELL, "A New Illustrator," *The Studio*, Vol. I, No. I, April 1893

Between the vanguard and the main body there is perpetual friction.

HUBERT CRACKANTHORPE, *The Yellow Book*, July 1894

It happened, the next day after the funeral, I came upon reproductions of Aubrey Beardsley's "Atalanta," and of the tail-piece to "Salome," and others. I sat and looked and my soul leaped out upon the new thing. I was bewildered, wondering, grudging, fascinated. I looked a long time, but my mind, or my soul, would come to no state of coherence. I was fascinated and overcome, but yet full of stubbornness and resistance.... I went straight to Emily, who was leaning back in her chair, and put the "Salome" before her.

"Look," said I, "look here!"

She looked; she was short-sighted, and peered close. I was impatient for her to speak. She turned slowly at last and looked at me, shrinking, with questioning.

"Well?" I said.

"Isn't it—fearful?" she replied, softly.

"No!—why is it?"

"It makes you feel—Why have you brought it?"

"I wanted you to see it."

Already I felt relieved, seeing that she too was caught in the spell....

"Give it me, will you?" George asked, putting out his hand for the book. I gave it him, and he sat down to look at the drawings....

"I want her more than anything—And the more I look at these naked lines, the more I want her. It's a sort of fine sharp feeling, like these curved lines. I don't know what I'm saying—but do you think she'd have me? Has she seen these pictures?"

"No."

"If she did perhaps she'd want me—I mean she'd feel it clear and sharp coming through her."

"I'll show her and see."

D. H. LAWRENCE, *The White Peacock*, 1911

No wonder Beardsley's drawings became a kind of catmint to adolescents and continued to be so for almost 30 years. I was one of the adolescents thus bewitched. Forty-eight years ago I was producing pastiches of Beardsley with an excitement which I have seldom felt since. I remember my house-master discovering one of them in my desk, and saying: "It's erotic and neurotic, and I won't have it in my house." My housemaster's comment, although correct as far as it went, was incomplete; and I like to think that even at the age of 14 I had recognised Beardsley's extraordinary powers of design.... And I now admire it (the work) even more than I did at the age of 14....

SIR KENNETH CLARK, *The Sunday Times*, 8 May 1966

Exhibition

THE LAST ITEM in the last room (No. 611) is Austin Spare's art-school and no doubt accurate and wholly dead pencil drawing of Mabel Beardsley done about 1910, six years before she died of cancer in the second year of the war. It came to the Victoria and Albert Museum from Canon John Gray who gave it in memory of his friend André Raffalovich: both died in Edinburgh in 1934. Mabel Beardsley's death-bed had been one of the centres of that London. Charles Ricketts made "Beardsley" dolls for her. Yeats gave her a set of verses he had written for her. She sent a copy north —"André with Mabel's love." She figures among the obsessive memories of those London years that Pound carried into *The Pisan Cantos*—

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and
The proud shall not lie by the proud
amid dim green lighted with candles
Mabel Beardsley's red head for a glory....

Mr. Brian Reade suggests that there had been incest. It is possible: anything, one feels was possible. Here, on the walls in this room, are Sickert's drawing of Beardsley, Sickert's portrait, *Full-length, bareheaded, holding cane and gloves, among tombs: 1894,* a caricature by Beerbohm. "He puts his hand upon the wall," Yeats wrote, "and stares into a mirror. He mutters, 'Yes, yes, I look like a sodomite,' which he certainly did not. 'But no, I am not that,' and then begins ranting against his ancestors, accusing them of that and this...." In the last show case is a photograph of his mother, severe, sad, in a tailor-made, for the photographer. She died in 1932. She had dominated and been dominated by her only son. About her responsibility and her knowledge we can only guess. One of her letters, dated 1923, displays every sign of paranoid delusion. About her long years we know little. She had not been mentioned in her son's will.

In this last show case are the marvellous photographs of Beardsley by Frederick Evans: it is these that fix his image. There is that photograph of Beardsley in the hotel room in Mentone where he died. It is heavily draped, and round him are the objects he wanted near him: engravings from Mantegna; the two candlesticks that had stood on his work table —they had some fetishistic meaning for him— now arranged on either side of a crucifix; and a photograph of Raffalovich. Here too are photographs of Leonard Smithers, and a copy of John Gray's *Silverpoints,* designed by Charles Ricketts, and paid for by Oscar Wilde. There are photographs of the young Raffalovich and books by him (earlier on we had seen a copy of his *Uranisme et Unisexualité,* 1896); photographs of the young, obviously beautiful Gray who, however, was not—the law courts said—the "original" of Dorian Gray.

No. 611: and then we can leave. I leave sick of the lot. Of the little silly precious books: of "ordinary," "limited," "de luxe," "Japanese vellum": as they run right through to Dowson's *Pierrot of the Minute* and to *Silverpoints* —which could be taken as the emblem of a cult. The pretence that there is merit in the writings of Gray (granted a minimal interest in his translations) or Raffalovich is trying; I came out sick of both of them, feeling that even Raffalovich's loyalty and generosity were touched with a rich man's self-indulgence and that the loyalty was part of a larger pretence. And sick of "collectors' items," and of the mere idea of "collecting," and all that this activity could in this context mean, and of Leonard Smithers and his activities and his associates. Weary of the situation that includes all this and the uncertainties and the long certain sufferings of those two women; and of Beardsley spitting blood in that troubling hotel-room; and tired of Beardsley's art.

Mr. Reade's astonishing exhibition[1] is chronologically arranged; he has included, quite rightly, a selection of documents, letters, photographs, books, connected with Beardsley's life, friends, associates, and has illustrated the reception and impact of Beardsley's work. Any exhibition builds up its own set of pressures and responses. To some of these professionals—art historians, critics, practising artists—are by training immunised. Yet making every allowance for this, my own weariness and fatigue do record, I think, something of what is really there. Such reactions contain responses to a life and lives and situations that are over and done with; and must include a sense of historical pathos. Yet I have never seen why we should be forbidden to respond to recorded lives and situations as well as to art. And Beardsley was seen by contemporaries, friends and enemies, as "Beardsley," as "representative" and very soon (it started in his own lifetime) as an "historical" figure, one whose life and art, that is, could be used to define a moment that was felt really to exist, to be there "historically," different from other moments, and susceptible to description.

Something can be done, if only in a preliminary way, to sort out the situation of stresses that shaped those books and those lives; and was the condition of Beardsley's rise to the status of "Beardsley"; and of his disaster too. Temperament, gift, and social moment coincided. The problems about his art are also social problems. And the power of his art has also to do with this coincidence. That it has power cannot be denied. My own responses were also responses to something "really there" in his art, responses to power.

[1] See *Aubrey Beardsley Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum 1966.* Catalogue of the original drawings, letters, manuscripts, paintings; and of books, posters, photographs, documents, etc. By Brian Reade and Frank Dickinson. H.M. Stationery Office, 7s.

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Processes, Prices, and Circulation

MR. READE begins his account of Beardsley (in the picture-book the *V. & A.* has published to go with the exhibition[2]) by inviting us to dismiss Roger Fry's "The Fra Angelico of Satanism" and substitute "The Master of the Line Block." He is right, of course; Joseph Pennell was really making this point when he was commissioned to introduce Beardsley to whatever audience read the first issue of the new magazine *The Studio,* "An illustrated magazine of fine and applied art" (6d. a month), in April 1893.

Introducing Beardsley, "a new illustrator," Pennell, right at the beginning, introduced "Beardsley," the historicised figure, a man who "has recognised that he is living in the last decade of the nineteenth century": Pennell's criterion is Beardsley's acceptance and exploitation of the available technological situation. Pennell intended a polemic against those who wanted to go back in time, and, pretty obviously, against what we may call "Morris" and one side of "arts and crafts." He discusses specimens from Beardsley's work for J. M. Dent's *Morte D'Arthur*—"to be published in half-crown monthly parts, beginning in June next": and that price was part of the technological situation, for it is not a Morris price. And to all the other "Beardsleys" I would propose to add: *Beardsley/"Beardsley" as ephiphenomenon of a communications system/situation*. That, phrased in one of our current dialects, is as outrageous as what Roger Fry intended; and not, really, so silly.

That Beardsley should have been introduced by a commissioned article from an established name (though we only dimly remember Pennell); and that his article should be followed by announcement of a forthcoming publication: all that is also part of this communications situation. So is *The Studio* itself. It is now received doctrine that *The Studio,* with an international circulation, became a prime agent in the establishing of *l'art nouveau,* an international style. Robert Schmutzler in his popular (and sometimes inaccurate) *Art Nouveau*[3] stresses the part played by *The Studio* and other English art magazines. He connects this with the part played by exhibitions in carrying the new art, and with the evolution of the poster and the whole "art of advertising" in this period. (Arthur Symons was making points like this in 1898.) Schmutzler, however, is concerned to interpret all this in terms of *Art Nouveau*'s "narcissistic and exhibitionistic drives." It would be more important to start by interpreting the situation in terms of processes, and circulation, and prices.

Unfortunately, the kind of information we need is at present only available, if at all, in fragments. "The new journalism" came from America, we are told, in the 1880s. The names Newnes and Harmsworth are, of course, written into the text-books: *Tit-bits,* 1881, *The Daily Mail,* 1896. Something was happening round about 1890, and this involved the new photo-mechanical means of reproducing visual material.[4] We need to know more about this, and far more about the content of the "new journalism" and particularly about the establishment of the "interview" and the article about the living person, illustrated or not, as staples. Such devices are related to the advertisement, and through them the person is involved in a "selling" situation.

By 15 February 1894, in a review of the hard-cover *Morte D'Arthur* and the Wilde *Salome* with Beardsley's illustrations, *The Studio* is saying:

> Since Mr. Joseph Pennell introduced Mr. Aubrey Beardsley in the first number of *The Studio* barely ten months have passed, yet already he has (as the designs we receive in the *Prize* Competitions would alone suffice to prove) his disciples, imitators, and even (in a clever *menu* of a Glasgow dinner) his parodist. France and America have praised or attacked him, and to a following of younger men he is the latest and strongest force in decorative art.

The Malory had been coming out in monthly parts, from June 1893. Beardsley had been contributing regularly, from February 1893, to *The Pall Mall Budget*. He had been seen in *The*

---

[2] *Aubrey Beardsley*. Victoria and Albert Museum, 8s. 6d.

[3] Thames & Hudson, 1964.

[4] *The Sunday Graphic* in the 1880s is said—I have to use that phrase—to have been the first mass-circulation English paper to exploit these processes. In 1891 George Newnes started *The Strand Magazine*. His motto was "a picture on every page," and this almost came true. The first issue of *The Strand* (6d., monthly) sold 300,000 copies, and by the end of the decade its circulation was about 450,000 copies. Also in 1891 Hodder and Stoughton started their *Bookman,* an unstudied magazine, and one that goes well with *The Studio* of 1893: both are intended for audiences with specialised interests, yet both are intended for large circulation, and use devices of the new journalism (*The Studio*'s competitions, for example).

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Pall Mall Magazine, and in books published in 1893 by Nutt, and Longmans. Dent in that year had brought out the three volumes of *Bon-Mots* (half-a-crown each for the ordinary edition) with their proliferation of designs ("208 grotesques and other ornaments"). Elkin Mathews and John Lane had started employing him: the *Keynotes* series started with George Egerton's *Keynotes* in December 1893, with his cover and title page. (He was to do 22 from now until 1896.) This was cheap: 3s. 6d. a volume. In March 1894 came the first poster: the blue and green woman behind a spotted transparent curtain who advertised Miss Florence Farr's daring season of plays at The Avenue Theatre, Dr. John Todhunter's *Comedy of Sighs,* Shaw's *Arms and the Man* and Yeats' *Land of Heart's Desire.* She also appeared on the programmes. The first *Yellow Book* came out in April 1894, costing 5s. Beardsley's prospectus for it had prepared the way.

Nothing is more surprising when you first come on it than the rush to imitate Beardsley. *The Studio* was right to call attention to it. It could only have happened—and Beardsley could only have become "Beardsley"—because he could and would work in ways appropriate to the technological and social situation that permitted and wanted large-circulation publication of visual materials; that allowed, and depended on, rapid distribution; that used visual ways—the assault on the eye—of selling plays or books or magazines like soap or sewing-machines: one that "advertised" or "sold" persons as news.

The Beardsley Boom

MAX BEERBOHM in his cautious obituary article (*The Idler,* May 1898) said that the "Beardsley boom" was over before he died.

> "The Beardsley boom," as it was called, had begun with *The Yellow Book,* and it had ceased with *The Savoy,* and Beardsley had, to all intents and purposes, been forgotten by the general public. For more than a year he had been in this or that quiet place to which invalids are sent. There were no new "Beardsley posters" on the London hoardings. The paragraphists of the London Press gradually let him be.... But while it lasted, how fierce the "Beardsley" boom had been!... Aubrey Beardsley was famous in his youth.... And unless I am mistaken, he enjoyed his fame, and was proud of it, though as a great artist who had a sense of humour, he was perhaps, a little ashamed of it too, now and then.

I do not think that Max was always an altogether reliable witness; but he recognised some of the conditions that made "Beardsley"; and he saw that Beardsley wanted to be "Beardsley."

Max's dating of the "Beardsley boom" is interesting and it is as well to be as accurate as we can, at present, be about this. Legend notwithstanding, evidence for the general impact of that first *Studio* is lacking. A search of some four morning and six evening papers, nineteen weeklies and fortnightlies that normally carried reviews, shows no great rush to notice *The Studio* as soon as it came out, let alone to shout about Beardsley. Of these twenty-nine papers only nine noticed the event and only three of these bother to mention Beardsley. *The London Figaro* (20 April 1893) was the most interested—

> ... they are the quaintest things I ever saw. His men and things are like nothing (I hope) that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, but we are called upon by Mr. Pennell to bow down and worship them all the same. I refuse. The drawings are flat blasphemies against art. Burne Jones I admire and the oddities of Japanese draughtsmen I can appreciate, but when a man mixes up impotent imitations of Burne Jones at his very worst with pseudo-Japanese effects, and serves up the whole with a sauce of lilies and peacock feathers I think it is only charitable to think that the author of all this rococo business has a twist in his intellects. His decorative borders, however, show that if his gifts were directed into the right channel....

This is hardly a shout of alarm. The *Bon-Mots* volumes in June and December do not seem to have hit the papers, either. The *Morte D'Arthur* did little better. Of six reviews of George Egerton's *Keynotes* in December 1893 not one mentions Beardsley. But by March 1894 things have changed. The last *Bon-Mots* volume still drops into silence (*The Times* nods "a pretty little volume," 22 March 1894). *The Star,* on the same day, adds something: "An exceedingly pretty little volume, with grotesques by Mr. Aubrey Beardsley who seems to be as industrious as he is brilliant." That date is important. *Salome* came out in March. Our papers do not give us so many reviews of *Salome*—five—but the notes struck are important. And in that same month came the theatrical poster for Florence Farr, with that uninterpretable female and sadly discordant letterpress.

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Journalists really did notice this poster; and their comments are worth looking at. They saw it as quite a new sort of advertisement for a London theatre, as bringing a Paris style to London, as showing that younger artists were beginning to find the poster a legitimate form of art. They also saw "Beardsley"—

> ... an ingenious piece of arrangement, attractive by its novelty and cleverly imagined. The mysterious female who looms vaguely through the transparent curtain is, however, unnecessarily repulsive in facial type....
> (*The Globe,* 21 March 1894)

Max was almost right in his dating. The real stir started just before the first *Yellow Book* was published at the end of April.

"Ordinary" and "Limited"

ARTHUR SYMONS' important obituary article on Beardsley was published in the same month as Max's, in the invaluable *Fortnightly*. He put Max's point like this:

> And he attained, to the full, one, certainly, of his many desires, and that one, perhaps, of which he was most keenly or most continuously conscious: contemporary fame, the fame of a popular singer or a professional beauty, the fame of Yvette Guilbert or of Cléo de Mérode... the desire to fill his few working years with the immediate echo of a great notoriety.

Symons goes on to elaborate a theory of "a new, very modern" art:

> which has expressed itself very largely in the *Courrier Français*, the *Gil Blas* illustré and the posters. All this new art may be said to be, what the quite new art of the poster certainly is, art meant for the street, for people who are walking fast. It comes into competition with the newspapers, with the music halls; half contemptuously, it popularises itself....

Symons' observation (his *explanation* belongs to another sort of argument) is just.

Where would a professional beauty—Mrs. Langtry in England—have been without the photograph? Or Yvette Guilbert without the poster? They "sold themselves" through the photo-mechanical processes of reproduction and duplication. Beardsley could and would draw for the new media; and he wanted what the media could give; and was ready to work very hard to get it. And it was very acute of Symons to see that the model for the role Beardsley sought was in the theatre, that uneasily placed institution. The fame of an Yvette Guilbert or a Cléo de Mérode is what happens when through the exploitation of new media of communication a half-world or a half-acknowledged world, or even a secret world, is admitted to or seeks admission to the open world. This is the point at which Beardsley so notoriously and, for his contemporaries, so characteristically stood. We can put it that he stood, from the beginning, between the "ordinary" or wide-circulation book or magazine and advertisement, and the limited-circulation book; and moved into the secret world of pornography. The frontiers were—and are—so difficult to demarcate.

The great crises of the '90s came when vanguard positions met and were communicated by the new media, technical and social. It was this meeting that fixed and carried and by divulgation (sheer reiteration in the papers, I sometimes think) even created the historiographical stereotypes and cultural designations that were used and enacted in the decade itself, and so much later; and that prescribed so many of the characteristics of the *modern movement*. This meeting also altered and destroyed lives.

John Lane was prepared to make a name and profits out of *modernity*. In 1887 with his friend Elkin Mathews he set up as bookseller in the little shop in Vigo Street that they called The Bodley Head. Late in 1889, they began publishing, their first book being—alas—Richard Le Gallienne's *Volumes in Folio* (limited: 250 copies). Mathews was a very different sort of person and the partnership was dissolved in 1894. Lane's, I imagine, were the techniques of selling; and I guess that his accounts might show that his print orders, his moving between the "limited" and the (notionally) "unlimited" editions, and his falterings were not unconnected with how much working capital he had: at the start there could not have been much. Obviously he was completely at home with the new selling methods and he is deeply interesting as he moves between "minority" and "large" sales, pushing minority or "vanguard"—Crackanthorpe used the word and so, therefore, may we—positions into "news," "advertisement."

In June 1892 Wilde's *Salome* had been banned by the Lord Chamberlain while Sarah Bernhardt was actually rehearsing it in London. An entertaining Wilde comedy followed, lasting for the rest of the year, with letters to the press, interviews, attacks on the stage censorship, paragraphs, caricatures: what was not quite yet a routine "publicity" situation. In

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February 1893 Mathews and Lane brought out the French text, and this kept the row going. *The Times* was very angry: "It is an arrangement in blood and ferocity, morbid, bizarre, repulsive. . . ." In February 1894 Lane offered a select but not necessarily rich public 500 copies at 15s. (blue cloth) and 100 at 30s.—(green silk) of Wilde in English, "pictured" by Beardsley. Lane had been his own censor: Beardsley's proposed title-page with the little angel worshipping an emphatically hermaphroditic herm was expurgated; the "Black Cape" and "Toilet of Salome" were substitutions. But even so there was enough for reviewers who, this time, could hardly not see the pictures. *The Times* (8 March 1894) was still very angry. The pictures are—

> fantastic, grotesque, unintelligible for the most part, and, so far as they are intelligible, repulsive. They would seem to represent the manners of Judaea as conceived by Mr. Oscar Wilde portrayed in the style of the Japanese grotesque as conceived by a French *décadent*. The whole thing must be a joke, and it seems to us a very poor joke!

The Studio (March 1894) is still—just—on Beardsley's side—

> Audacious and extravagant. . . . Those who dislike Mr. Beardsley's work will be happy in the possession of the documentary evidence to support their opinion, while those who find it the very essence of the decadent *fin de siècle* will rank *Salome* as the typical volume of a period too recent to estimate its actual value, and too near to judge of its ultimate influence on decorative art. All collectors of rare and esoteric literature will rank this book as one of the most remarkable productions of the modern press.

The Times had little more than a month to wait for *The Yellow Book*: editor Henry Harland, art editor Aubrey Beardsley, in boards, quarterly, 5s. (or, from October 1894, $1.50). Yellow was an early Aesthetic colour (sunflowers), the colour of cheap fiction ("Yellowbacks"), the colour of "French novels." Beardsley had done a small yellow poster whose yellow is spring and innocence, emblematically rendered by the safe English daffodil that goes with April, and by a sweet maid dangling a wide innocent hat. He had also done for the prospectus cover a yellow and black nightpiece showing another sort of girl with another sort of hat, accompanied by her street-lamp, poring over jumbled books at a stall kept by an elderly impassive Pierrot.

On 31st March *The Westminster Gazette* had printed a paragraph inspired by Lane, and quoting his prospectus—

> We understand that orders have already been received for over 5,000 copies, but it is expected that at least 10,000 will be sold. . . . "In many ways," we are told, "its contributors will employ a freer hand than the limitations of the old-fashioned periodical can permit." While it will seek always, its promoters say, to "preserve a delicate, decorous, and reticent mien, and conduct, it will at the same time have the courage of its modernness, and not tremble at the frown of Mrs. Grundy." The new venture is said to be the property of some private capitalists.

The day of publication was 15th April. This time there really was a press campaign and a sensation. *The National Observer* complained about Lane's advertising campaign—"judicious advertisements planted and injudicious interviews watered." *The Times* (20th April) accepted the declared purpose—

> destined we suppose, to be the organ of the New Literature and the New Art . . . [the cover] may be intended to attract by its very repulsiveness and insolence. . . . Its role seems to be a combination of English rowdyism with French lubricity. . . .

The Westminster Gazette's remark (18th April) about Beardsley's *Education Sentimentale* and portrait drawing of Mrs. Patrick Campbell—"we do not know that anything would meet the case except a short Act of Parliament to make this kind of thing illegal"—is really intended to be a joke: mockery being the best weapon, the paper obviously thought, against the "decadents" who "are here with pen and pencil," as "exquisitely morbid" and as "unconsciously comic as usual." So the magazine was placed, and its programmatic claim allowed. Such a claim was indeed made by publishing in the first issue Arthur Waugh's "Reticence in Literature," a statement of the conservative position, and, in the second (July) Hubert Crackanthorpe's rash rejoinder, celebrating and regretting the end of a battle—

> A sound, organised opinion of men of letters is being acquired; and in the little bouts with the *bourgeois*—if I may be pardoned the use of that wearisome word—no one has to fight single-handed. Heroism is at a discount; Mrs. Grundy is becoming mythological; a crowd of unsuspected supporters collect from all sides, and the deadly conflict of which we had been warned, becomes but an interesting skirmish.

Lane was not on oath when he provided an evening paper with figures for orders and ex-

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pected sales. However, there survives a rather defiant announcement by the firm which declares that within five days the first issue of 5,000 copies was sold out, that a second was exhausted, and that a third would be "ready on Monday, at all Booksellers, Libraries, and Railway Bookstalls." *The Yellow Book* was selling, I am sure (though Lane is still not on oath about figures). By January 1895 a fourth edition of Vol. I was advertised, and a second of II and III. But was it selling enough? I wonder what W. H. Smith, monopolist of railway bookstalls, and greatest general purveyor was doing? And Lane's "The Yellow Book Advertisements"—a proud rubric—tell a story. In Volume I there are announcements by 17 publishers (17 pages). In Volume II, 6 only (6 pages). In Volume III, 5 (5 pages). In Volume IV a sudden rise to 11. In the famous purged Volume V they are down to 4. In Volume VI, although Beardsley had now gone, there are only Lane's house announcements. In Volume VII, back to 4 . . . and so it staggers on, until the last, the thirteenth volume. Danger signs had, then, come right away: real red danger signs. With *The Yellow Book* Lane was out of the limited edition or the small edition market.

"WITHDRAW ALL BEARDSLEY'S DESIGNS OR I WITHDRAW ALL MY BOOKS WATSON." We can now see at the *V. & A.*, and dramatic enough it is, the cabled message in a clerk's huge anonymous handwriting that reached Lane in New York on 8 April 1895. There on Sunday, 7th April, he had been greeted by headlines: "Arrest of Oscar Wilde, *Yellow Book* under his arm."[5] Wilde had been arrested at the Cadogan Hotel on the evening of Friday, 5th April, and taken to Bow Street, where he was charged on the following day. At his hotel—

> he grasped his suède gloves in one hand and seized his stick with the other. Then he picked up from the table a copy of "The Yellow Book," which he placed in security under his left arm.

On the Saturday this was front page news in at least one London morning paper (*The Morning*), and one evening paper (*The Echo*). An outraged mob—so the story goes, but I have found no reports—broke the bow window of The Bodley Head. Wilde was in fact carrying, we are told, Pierre Louys' novel *Aphrodite*. What matters, however, is what the journalist said, and what Watson and Lane did. Beardsley was sacked.

The linking of Wilde and Beardsley was inaccurate so far as their relationships went, stupid in expression, vicious and horrible in intention and effects. Yet in an important way it was correct.

In 1898 Arthur Symons did not mention Wilde. He might have done so. Before Beardsley ever arrived that great comedian was seeking a role; and the social model of the theatre which Symons, rightly, found for Beardsley, we could use for Wilde: in the 1880s Wilde could be compared with Sarah Bernhardt, who to Henry James, for instance, had represented a new, offensive, corrupting, social figure. Wilde was looking for a role for the artist (or artist-critic); so was Beardsley; and both for a role capable of conceptualisation in established terms: artist/philistine-bourgeois, modulating into *decadent, fin de siècle, new* and the rest. Both showed that affinity, which Symons observed and which is very important, however it is to be explained, of the "modern" for the new media that project the artist's figure to wider and wider circles. Both were ruined by this specific gift. Such a figure, so projected, was not acceptable. Yet the media necessarily also projected and enlarged their exemplary fates. And so they came to us as designations for a cultural moment: "Wilde" and "Beardsley." As fact—what actually happened—and as legend, they have affected the social role of artist and art in later modernisms, or, at any rate, possible choices, alternatives, and fates for art and artist.

Open and Secret

AFTER *The Yellow Book* what was waiting for Beardsley were Leonard Smithers, André Raffalovich, Rome, and those last rooms in Boscombe, Bournemouth, Paris, Dieppe, Mentone. From childhood he had belonged to the minority of the dying. Smithers who paid him and Raffalovich who gave him charity stand also for minorities.

Leonard Smithers, bookseller and publisher, purveyor of pornography, moved from the first, dangerously and uneasily, between the open, the "limited," the "advanced," and the secret worlds: until the secret world wholly swallowed and destroyed him.

[5] That is Lane's story. The dating is mine; but I have not been able to make a proper check of the New York papers.

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In 1894 he had already "edited" and his dubious associate H. S. Nichols had published Sir Richard Burton's *Catullus,* and in 1897 they were to issue Burton's *Arabian Nights*: this partly indicates where the shadowy line was drawn. Smithers really did publish for the "vanguard," and before he met Beardsley in 1895, he had published Arthur Symons. One of the many paradoxes about *The Yellow Book* (and its legend) is that it never really had been a programmatic "vanguard" review: its claims to be read in this way are very mild, and round it there was most certainly not what Crackanthorpe called an organised opinion of men of letters. The reviewers of the first volume in *The Times* and *The Westminster Gazette* had their own reasons for separating out the contributors into the modern and the not so modern—clearly they were hoping to frighten established figures like Lord Leighton—but their point was not ill-taken, for even the first volumes were hesitant and eclectic. The new magazine, *The Savoy,* which Smithers brought out in January 1896, with Arthur Symons as literary editor and Beardsley as art editor, proposed to do what Lane had not wished or dared to do. And through the work of Symons, Yeats, and Beardsley *The Savoy* had a much stronger claim than *The Yellow Book*. Unfortunately the guard was so far in the van that Symons was left alone to provide all the text for the eighth and last number in December of that same year. Smithers did not offer a very acceptable (or financially safe) rallying point for an organised opinion. It is Yeats who records most dramatically the fierce hostility that surrounded *The Savoy* (that "Organ of the Incubi and the Succubi" as one of Yeats' Irish friends called it) and its contributors, affecting their lives and straining or breaking social relationships, reaching through many circles, focusing always on the hated name of Beardsley. W. H. Smith refused to put the magazine on their bookstalls, the manager picking on the reproduction of a Blake drawing as excuse. Yeats also says that this manager called Arthur Symons back from the door to say, "If contrary to our expectations *The Savoy* should have a large sale we should be very glad to see you again."

Smithers' publication of Beardsley's *Rape of the Lock* in 1896 and 1897 was perfectly open, if limited; and so were *A Book of Fifty Drawings* (1897) and the posthumous *Volpone* (1898); and so were, for example, his publications of Dowson and Vincent O'Sullivan and Max and of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1897).

Since the beginning of 1896 Smithers had been paying Beardsley—more or less and as he could—a weekly retainer for the rights in his new work. In that year, through Smithers, Beardsley moved right into the secret world when Smithers published *Lysistrata* (100 copies) with the drawings that had been finished during that summer. In 1897 Smithers was to issue the five Lucian drawings. Whatever part of Smithers' publishing career could be called open came to an end with his bankruptcy in 1899; but, though he issued Beardsley forgeries, he waited for a long time, until his life must have been very desperate, before he brought out, in 1907, just two years before his death, 50 copies (he claimed) on Japanese vellum, of the full unexpurgated text of *Under the Hill*. Since 1894, if not before that, Beardsley had been working on his pornographic novel, presumably on both open and secret versions, for there had been plans for open publication; and one of the mild shocks provided for the visitor to the *V. & A.* is the sight of his manuscript, written in what looks like an account book. It is the rather primitive shock that sometimes traps the literate: that anyone should actually have written all this out by hand.

"Mere Mischief"

Max, for the readers of *The Idler,* explains that Beardsley "had a boyish delight in shocking people"; "it was often in mere mischief that he chose, as in many of his grotesques for the *Bon-Mots* series to present such horribly ugly notions." Arthur Symons introduces the notion of artist against philistia and the wish to *épater le bourgeois,* while carefully qualifying its validity, and then adds a contrived paradox—

> Like most artists who have thought much of popularity, he had an immense contempt for the public; and the desire to kick that public into admiration, and then to kick it for admiring the wrong thing or not knowing why it was admiring, led him into many of his most outrageous practical jokes of the pen.

We should require more complicated explanations for what is so obviously a compulsive personal drive. Given the cultural moment, the gift, the luck, this drive could become a public role, as protest, as provocation, or as something more ambiguous and moving. We can watch Beards-

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ley pushing at the frontiers of the admissible from the beginning. There is that very early (I should think) drawing of the Madonna with foetus instead of divine child (No. 133) and the legend *Incipit Vita Nova*: a double blasphemy or joke, for the Madonna is Pre-raphaelite and the legend points to the cult, after Rossetti, of that Dante text. That, however, was private. In the winter of 1892 he was busy with illustrations for Lawrence and Bullen's "privately printed" *True History* of Lucian: "The drawings," he wrote to a friend, are certainly "the most extraordinary things that have ever appeared in a book.... They are also the most indecent...." There are certainly odd things among the *Morte D'Arthur* illustrations; and even odder among the *Bon-Mots* grotesques.

There is a genuine difficulty here, very frustrating for our attempts to see where and how what is admissible meets with what is not. Dent does not seem to have noticed what was going on, nor did the reviewers (or, at any rate, they did not say so). Very often we find ourselves asking this question about just how wide at this time were areas of innocence or ingenuousness—or disingenuousness. In *The Studio* itself, for example, an article of June 1893 on "The Nude in Photography" makes curious reading; and the illustrations of Italian boys are certainly curious (connoisseurs might care to note Baron Corvo's contribution). And how is it possible that Fisher Unwin should really have used Beardsley's poster for his series of Children's Books? What book could that bare-breasted be-feathered woman be reading as she sits back in her wing chair? What books can Fisher Unwin be offering and for what children? (One journalist did point out this incongruity.) Or there is the poster for Heinemann, advertising *The Spinster's Scrip, as compiled by Cecil Raynor* ("Daily extracts concerning matrimony"). There are two women, and whatever they are up to—they may well be spinsters—it can have little to do with anything acceptable; and not everyone who saw it on the hoardings would have thought it did. I have picked out these posters, because the poster was the most public of all the forms, but this list could go on and on. Lane, as we saw, had to expurgate the *Salome*. But he acquiesced in the combination of poster and prospectus cover for *The Yellow Book*, which is disingenuous, to say the least. For while the poster is all innocence, the prospectus is intended to provoke a certain kind of curiosity: what books is the street-walker thumbing over by the light of her street-lamp?

In January 1896 the prospectus for *The Savoy*, showing John Bull (all in pink) tricked out as Mercury, god of arts and eloquence—that joke is simple enough—had to be withdrawn because John Bull's breeches "were drawn in such a way as to suggest he was sexually excited." It was Yeats who read "The Ascension of St. Rose of Lima" in *The Savoy* as a charming blasphemy, because the saint's face expresses a love very far from the kind usually associated with sanctity.

Texts and Tricks

THE RELATIONSHIP between "illustrator" and "text" has always, notoriously, been difficult to define. That Beardsley paid not the slightest attention to his texts, or went even further, was clear to his contemporaries. "Pictured by" not "Illustrated by" was put on the title-page of the *Salome*: but even that evasion hardly describes what Beardsley was doing. Although Lane refused the unsuitable pictures, he allowed Beardsley's obvious caricatures of Wilde to stand. And the view put by the clever, malicious and influential reviewer in *The Saturday Review* must have strained the not very warm friendship between author and artist. This reviewer takes Beardsley's work as a huge joke at Wilde's expense—

> Mr. Aubrey Beardsley is a very clever young man, but we cannot think that his cleverness is quite agreeable to Mr. Wilde. Illustration by means of derisive parody of Felicien Rops, embroidered on to Japanese themes is a new form of literary torture; and no one can question that the author of *Salome* is on the rack.... Mr. Beardsley laughs at Mr. Wilde.... Let us turn to the "Toilette of Salome"... no wonder her conversation had an irreligious effect upon the Tetrarch. But what a fantastic way of illustrating a Biblical tragedy! We should like to test Mr. Aubrey Beardsley's *bona fides* by entrusting the *Athalie* of Racine to his care. Would he play the same pranks with *Samson Agonistes* as with *Salome*?

But Beardsley was quite capable of treating Racine or Milton in the same way. He was also quite unwilling to maintain a consistent style throughout a book. We might consider what he did, towards the end of his life, with poor Dowson's insubstantial piece *The Pierrot of the Minute* (1897). Pierrot's opening soliloquy calls for a glade, at the end of a path, a place

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where the courts and gardens of Versailles have been left far behind, with a statue of Cupid in front of a temple of love. Beardsley gives us a formal garden, with trellis, and Cupid, a fat putto, as a garden-god. And all the Pierrots are different in dress and face. The point about inconsistency could also be made about *The Lysistrata*. I think, too, that Beardsley can be accused of ignoring or savaging Pope in the *Rape of the Lock*. In his drawing for the scene of the rape, showing the Baron, scissors in hand, on the point of making the decisive action, the impassive frozen immobility of the persons involved has nothing whatever to do with the violence and energy of Pope's so carefully managed mock-heroic climax. What commands our attention in Beardsley's picture is the centrally placed figure of dwarf or boy, grotesque, page, or whatever he is—one of Beardsley's attendant figures—as he raises a cup to his lips. He is facing us, the spectators; his is the only face that has "expression"; and it is at us that he is winking and leering. If this is intended simply to draw our attention to his naughtiness in stealing a cup of coffee, then this is quite out of place, and destructive of Pope's moment. But it is easier to read his expression as inviting us to judge and comment on the scene and the persons, to involve us in his judgment of what it is all really like. I do not think Beardsley means this as a kind of equivalent for Pope's irony. We should take this invitation as being of the kind offered by the kneeling angel's analogous gesture on the *Salome* frontispiece. She, as she kneels before the hermaphroditic deity (emasculated or not), has her head turned to us with a sort of smile: she is either inviting us to join in the pleasures of this worship, which Beardsley is here offering—this is a frontispiece—as the theme of Wilde's text or to laugh knowingly at the god, the worship, and the whole affair of *Salome*; or to do both, perhaps.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK (1896)

Beardsley would only draw what he, at that moment, wanted to draw. His art could exist only in its own context. In other contexts Beardsley designs are ridiculous. Nothing is more absurd than Beardsley on a menu card (for The Playgoers Club, at the Criterion, 28 January 1894) alongside four worthy, solemnly posed photographic portraits, and that sort of conventional typography. Even funnier is the invitation card for the opening of the Prince's Ladies Golf Club (1894) showing two Beardsley women (in very black black) as golfers and Pierrot as caddie. And when Beardsley had tried to do conventional English "black and white" caricatures, like those he did, about 1893, for the very peripheral Count Stenbock to send to his young musician friend, he did no better than scores of "black and white" men were doing; and the same is true of the wholly undistinguished series for *The Pall Mall Budget* in 1893 (and even, unfortunately, of the suppressed "Queen Victoria as a Degas ballet dancer").

I would relate such failures, and such limits, to Beardsley's relationship, as illustrator, to his texts; and also to his persistent attempts to get the unpublishable openly published. "Mere mischief" or "boyishness" are not likely to content us today as an explanation of that persistent drive—for drive it was: or only if we read, as I think we must, the words in a distinctly sinister way: in the way that Mr. Steven Marcus reads the roots and intentions of the pornographer's fantasies. I have certainly nothing to add to what I have seen of Mr. Marcus' brilliant account of Victorian pornography. *Under the Hill* can be interpreted perfectly in the light of Mr. Marcus' "model"—"Pornotopia."[6] It is fantasy designed only to produce

[6] ENCOUNTER, August 1966.

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fantasy; and the fantasies belong where Mr. Marcus says they do—

> Pornography is, after all, nothing more than a representation of the fantasies of infantile sexual life, as these fantasies are edited and reorganised in the masturbatory day-dreams of adolescence.

The only act *Under the Hill* could provoke would be the solitary act; and we may well suspect that the solitary love was the only love that in effect Beardsley knew.

It is not hard to believe that it was at this early point in experience that Beardsley was fixed. And hard not to wonder whether Beardsley's drive to force the secret into the open, no matter what formula or role could be claimed for it ("artist" against "bourgeois" or the others) did not contain a genuine and inevitable confusion about the spheres of fantasy and the "real," taking "the real" to stand for the norms of society and the pressures and experiences that sustain them; or confusion between what was himself and what was outside himself.

Clues and Puzzles

THE *Yellow Book* drawing called "The Mysterious Rose Garden" shows as background a rose-trellis; in front of this a tall male figure in lavish flowered draperies, carrying a slender rod with a lantern hanging from it, bends over and whispers behind his raised right hand to a slender nude girl. We do not need much knowledge of traditional iconography to read this drawing correctly. The male figure is a divine messenger, for he has Mercury's winged slippers (as well as the rod, whose top we cannot see). The rose-hedge goes with the Virgin. The drawing then is a version of the Annunciation—the messenger's lantern may be a variant of Beardsley's familiar street lamp, a travesty of the angel's glory, or an allusion to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. Beardsley's friends knew that *Annunciation* was the title he intended; he is said to have been surprised and annoyed at suggestions that the drawing might give offence.

THE WAGNERITES
Victoria & Albert Museum Crown Copyright

Even without the true title the iconography works as clue, guiding our choice between alternative readings (and I think that once the joke or blasphemy has been uncovered this particular drawing has been pretty well exhausted).

I am hardly the first to think that other *Yellow Book* drawing called "The Wagnerites" to be among Beardsley's most beautiful and troubling achievements. Beardsley gives us this title and tells us that the people whom we see are listening to *Tristan and Isolde*. We are in the stalls of a theatre, somewhere very close to the audience, for the heads and shoulders of those women are large; in the background are two boxes, the figures in them less emphatic than the pilasters and curtains. Without the title and the name of the opera would we know anything else? We would know that we are seeing something very odd. This audience is of women and one man. There is, it is true, a man in each box, but they are very slightly indicated, and their presence does not modify our governing impression that there is just this one man among an audience of women, emphasised by his placing, by putting the whiteness of his head—he is almost bald—against the heavy blackness of the women's hair, and by making him elderly and fragile, so that he seems lost and dwarfed among the women's massive heads and shoulders. He is also, iconographically, a Jew. Even with the title and name of opera to help (and with the obvious bit of knowledge that Jews were important as patrons of music) I can go no further. The plain answer, that this is what a London audience for *Tristan and Isolde* actually was, will not do: the exaggeration of the women and the treatment of the one man makes it plain that some comment is intended. "This is really the sort of audience you will find at *Tristan and Isolde*" leaves us with the word "sort"; and this is just the problem. I cannot get any further because I cannot read what these women *express,* although I have used some adjectives that suggest I can. I can

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make some guesses, based on some familiarity with Beardsley's personal iconography, but these are very uncertain, and mostly in the form of questions like "Are we intended to think of lesbians?" or "Is this the joke: that a London audience for *Tristan and Isolde* consisted of lesbians, and not very young lesbians, either, and an elderly Jew?"

I am making the large assumption that Beardsley drawings must be *read*.

"Master of the Line Block": of course Mr. Reade is right. "Extraordinary powers of design": Sir Kenneth Clark rests on that, and he is also right. From Pennell's *Studio* article on both friends and enemies praised Beardsley's arrangements of black and white and his design ("line" was often the word—"Beardsley's line"). The *Sunday Times* reviewer of the first number of *The Savoy* could write—

> The audacious "decadence" of Mr. Aubrey Beardsley cannot blind the critic to the splendid decorative effect of his composition, his pattern, his ideas.

And obviously Mr. Reade or Sir Kenneth Clark, faced with a Beardsley drawing, can carry further than any layman can the process of pointing out whatever it is in the complex structure in front of them that they most want for their purposes. But this is a process, and a process of isolation, and choice. I take it that there is really no need to argue about this. The most isolable or isolate specimen of "design" or "line" must be subject to a most complex process of reading.

At any rate Beardsley is still going to be read. "It's very literary, isn't it?" is an answer I often got when I questioned young art-students and young people attentive to the visual arts about his work. They were not, I found, talking about Beardsley's supposed dependence as illustrator on literary texts, nor about his use, which they knew, or suspected, of secondary visual sources. They were trying to show their strong sense—and the tone of their question was distinctly suspicious—that Beardsley's work demands immediate reference to some body of extra-visual material, to the region of verbalisations.

Beardsley's contemporaries had no doubt at all about this. And whatever they made of their reading, they were right to try.

But how to read? Traditional iconographical elements in "The Mysterious Rose Garden" give us our clue. And more work certainly needs to be done on Beardsley's iconographical system. His Pierrots are an obvious case for study in connection with what French artists and writers, and English writers influenced by them, were making of Pierrot. His Wagnerian themes are another. His foetus-child-old man is an instance of another sort, and his use in general of the "attendant figure." It would also be important to look at his faces and figures in the light of what current medical and general lore held to be the physical stigmata of sexual excess; but I do not know whether there is some Rosetta stone that would help us here.

Traditional iconography may be difficult to read. The gesture Lysistrata, in the title-page drawing, is making with her right hand derives from the traditional gesture of *pudeur*; an early title for this drawing calls the gesture one of defence; but if we put it beside a gesture in the "Athenian Women in Distress" which we cannot misinterpret, can we not read it as a gesture showing just how Lysistrata plans to console herself in the meantime? And tradition gives us the clue to "The Mysterious Rose Garden," but leaves us only with a final puzzle: what is the message that is being delivered to this Mary?

Then there are the literary clues. The title "L'Education Sentimentale" tells precisely what is going on in that drawing: an elderly bawd is instructing a far from innocent young girl. Without the title we could have given only an approximate guess. The same is true for the drawing called "Messalina returning home." Yet such clues are very often not clues. I did not find the clues for "The Wagnerites" decisive. Beardsley's relationship with his literary texts is so ambiguous that the *Saturday Review* reviewer was within his rights to read the *Salome* pictures as he did, and I was only able to offer alternatives for the title-page, and for "The Rape of the Lock."

Between the puzzle and the clue: it is exactly here that Beardsley's art, at its most characteristic, what we mean when we say "Beardsley," stands.

This is a very uncomfortable terrain. Beardsley's contemporaries had to undergo in many ways what, years later, in the provinces, Lawrence makes his young man register as the sensation of the "new thing." Writing of "The Wagnerites" I did not mention what might well have come first: the force of the blacks and whites. Black and white were, and are, notoriously ambivalent in their references.

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And I wonder how far this had to do with the reactions of Beardsley's audiences; for his mastery of the media was such that never had his audiences seen blacks so black, and whites so white, nor their juxtapositions so cunningly arranged. They had also to put up with dislocations of space, uncertainty of topography, and of action. What are those faces telling us? What is really happening? (Messalina might as well be going out as coming home.) Objects are neither one thing nor another, or they are two things at once. Is that a plant or a peacock feather coming from the ground: or is it both at once? Is that the leg of a table, or a human arm? Is that hair, or fur, animal, or human? Is that a foetus or a child or an old man? Or, worse, is that a man or a woman? Beardsley's contemporaries thought that the clues mostly pointed to sex in one form or another. Few can have read them so straightforwardly as Lawrence made his untutored George read the famous "line."

The terrain between the puzzle and the clue is the terrain of the indeterminate and of alternatives. It is over this terrain that Beardsley has power.

We are back at "boyishness" or "mischief"—or "incorrigible youthfulness of spirit" if we prefer John Gray's words—and at the account and sad application we are bound to offer of such words. For we know that there is a passage of childhood experience (and it is here that Professor Gombrich and Ernst Kris have found the sources for the achievement and the power of caricature) when objects, and names, and shapes, and their limits and operations, are not established, and one may change into another.

Circles

MOST OF THOSE who go to the *V. & A.* will not have heard of either Raffalovich or John Gray, and will perhaps look at those books and photographs, and at Beardsley's letters to Raffalovich, with little more than a nod of curiosity. Little more may seem called for; and yet the histories of those two friends tell us something about the crises of the 1890s; and their records here add to a sense of oppression. Gray and Raffalovich survived: under conditions.

Beardsley's published letters to Raffalovich (they are the letters John Gray published in 1904, with Raffalovich's name suppressed) begin in May 1895. Raffalovich was in Berlin. This was the Oscar Wilde spring. It was tactful not to be in England, if you could manage it. Gray was presumably at his job in the library of the Foreign Office. Both men were in danger. Both, in whatever ways, belonged to the homosexual minority. Both were self-made *littérateurs*. Both sought roles in London at those points where the vanguard, the secret, and the public met. Each sought the social role that a writer could have; neither was primarily or consistently a writer; or had the writer's gifts or vocation.

André Raffalovich sought a modernised version of an older role. Son of a Jewish international banker, he belonged also to another minority, that of the very rich; it was on money that his life—or lives—and survival were predicated, and his money was to help sustain Gray's style. He had appeared in London from Paris in the early 1880s, his target being the "aesthetic" literary-social world. His literary success was negligible: he had no talent. His books were, I suppose, published at his own expense, and in tiny editions: even the British Museum's collection is very incomplete, and in a specialised market copies fetch very high prices. How successful he was socially is doubtful: what is remembered is Wilde's reported remark that Raffalovich had come to England to set up a salon and had only achieved a saloon.

In 1890 John Gray had been received into the Roman Catholic Church: another minority, but a highly institutionalised minority. Raffalovich followed him in February 1896. In 1898 Gray entered the Scots College in Rome; in that year Raffalovich was admitted to the Dominican third order. In 1902 Gray went to Edinburgh as a parish priest. There, in that respectable suburb, Morningside, he spent the rest of his life, assiduous, impeccable in his duties, if a trifle remote, and silent about many things. In 1905 Raffalovich—whose social life after 1895 seems to be undocumented—went to Morningside too; and there he lived until his death in 1934.

The last phase of Beardsley's illness began early in 1896. We have his letters running concurrently, one set to Smithers, one to Raffalovich. So ill, so unemployable, Beardsley depended on both. He addresses Raffalovich as "Mentor"; and it is said that Raffalovich's letters to him—which do not seem to be avail-

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able—played a part in Beardsley's conversion to the Roman Catholic Church. He was received at Bournemouth in March 1897. The news that Beardsley gives of his devotions chimes with what we are told of Raffalovich's Catholicism, that it was simple, unsophisticated, unintellectual. In his letters to Smithers we hear a recognisable voice, a man speaking freely to a friend; his letters to Raffalovich carry an altogether different tone, which indicates another sort of relationship. Yet we need not question his motives, nor a dying and exiled man's sources of consolation and support. And that famous last letter to Smithers, "in my death agony," invoking Christ's name, and begging Smithers to destroy "all obscene drawings" bears its drama properly within an allowed tradition of language and occasion. Smithers was soon selling forgeries of it. And to be caught between Smithers and Raffalovich meant, surely, social arrest, standstill, impasse. Lines of communication were closed.

Some critics have been happier with the "post-*Yellow Book*" Beardsley, with the *Rape of the Lock* and *Under the Hill* illustrations, which they could talk about in terms of "decoration"; and they have saluted Beardsley's turning to French eighteenth-century artists as a liberation; and have even optimistically found a "return to Nature" here, and in the initials he did for the unfinished *Volpone*. I cannot share this view and I can see no "development." There seems to me growing dependence on his visual sources, in the sense that explicit reference to them becomes part of the whole reference of his work, as with the Pierrot drawings of Dowson's play: if we can call this kind of allusion "literary," then the drawings become "literary" in a weakening way; and even the judgment *pastiche* cannot be excluded.

Of the *Volpone* frontispiece Mr. Reade says that Beardsley wanted it to have something of the quality of a seventeenth-century engraving: it is far too like one, I should say. Nor is it sufficiently unlike "The Baron's Prayer" in *The Rape of the Lock*. With *Volpone* Beardsley was convinced that he was doing something new. "I have definitely left behind me all my former methods," he wrote to Smithers; and those letters, written in his last weeks, are very moving, for they record the passion of the artist for his means: his truest passion. A new way of doing things if it really is new—ought to mean that a new thing is being done. Yet it is *Volpone* that Beardsley is handling: that play where men are also figured as beasts and birds, dangerous, vile: Fox, Fly, Vulture, Raven, Carrion Crow; where the protagonist has his attendant figures and they are ambiguous monsters, Dwarf, Eunuch, Hermaphrodite.

The terrain is too familiar. This fresh start was no new beginning: only the revolving of the circle Beardsley was bound to walk in.

Late Lyric

An area one inch by about
Three inches of his left arm
Is heated by the sun. Warming his nose,
He bends to kiss her in the sun.
An area one inch by about
Three inches of her left cheek
Is heated by the kiss.
She reaches out an arm from infinity
To take him apart,
Till he is one inch by about
Three inches of wetness on the skirt
And curtain of her perfect love.

Peter Porter

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Lord Chalfont

The Politics of Disarmament

SINCE WARS begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed. To this proposition the governments of most of the civilised people of the world are formally dedicated, if anything at all is meant by the opening words of the constitution of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organisation. Yet the minds of men remain, it seems, painfully confused about how those defences are to be constructed.

There are those to whom disarmament is a subject of almost entirely academic interest, if, indeed it interests them at all. They have grown accustomed to apparently endless disarmament negotiations at the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva, in the United Nations and elsewhere. They are convinced that no one is really serious about the subject, that no one is in fact prepared to take the military and political risks that might be inseparable from drastic disarmament agreements and that the whole complex of disarmament negotiations is no more than a gigantic public relations exercise designed to keep public opinion quiet while the serious business of power politics occupies the real attention of international statesmen. There are others for whom disarmament is a matter of passionate emotional commitment. They often equate disarmament with their private vision of an ideal world—a world from which armed forces and the threat of violence have been totally and finally removed. They, too, believe that all that stands in the way of the achievement of this world is the perversity and obduracy of politicians.

Finally there are those who suggest, and are prepared to argue with cogency, that in any case the process of disarmament would be in itself dangerous and destabilising and that the existing conflicts and pressures between nation States in effect resolve themselves into a balance of power that provides substantially more security than would be available in a disarmed or a disarming world. This theory has been reinforced in the minds of many observers by the introduction into the military equation of the nuclear weapon.

Much of this confusion springs from the basic failure of the political mind to comprehend the nature of the scientific revolution that has overtaken it. The cleverness that has released appalling forces is unmatched by the wisdom needed to understand and control them. There is, it seems, no disposition to accept that in the search for international sanity we are unlikely to achieve what we have so far failed to achieve except by means that we have not so far used.

Within this general framework of obsolete political philosophy lies a more specific failure of public commitment. The traditional apathy towards foreign affairs—an apathy that sturdily ignores the truth of John Kennedy's observation that while domestic policy can only defeat us, foreign policy can kill us—bedevils with arguments left over from pre-nuclear politics the crucial search for a means of controlling the power of nuclear weapons. At one end of the scale the sensitivities are blunted by what H. G. Wells called "the crazy combative patriotism that plainly threatens to destroy civilisation." At the other end political realities are ignored in the clamour for quick solutions whose attractions owe more to their potential for moral catharsis than their likely effect on the international scene. In the pursuit of peace unilateralism and patriotism are equally irrelevant.

In the attempt to relate the conduct of international affairs to some coherent political philosophy it is necessary to engage in a subtle and flexible intellectual process which has been vividly described by a Belgian observer as "con-

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trolled schizophrenia." It relates to the process of seeking to achieve long-term aims of peace, and equity and morality in international affairs while, understanding, and accepting, that the world in which we operate is combative, inequitable and often immoral.

This dichotomy is especially pressing in the esoteric *demi-monde* of disarmament negotiations. The realities of power politics, as distasteful and even offensive as they may be, cannot be ignored even in the search for peace. It is crucial to understand and to accept what are in the present political structure of the world the practical and realistic aims of disarmament negotiations—what is it that is really achievable in arms control and disarmament—and secondly, what is the nature of the obstacles that stand in their way.

LET US TAKE, to begin with, general and complete disarmament, which is the declared aim of most of the world's civilised governments. It is important to be clear at the outset exactly what general and complete disarmament means. It does *not* mean a world in which there are no weapons and no armed forces and from which the sanction of violence or the threat of violence has been totally removed. This would presuppose a transformation in human nature, and especially in the patterns of group behaviour, of an entirely revolutionary kind. There is little prospect that such a transformation will take place in the lifetime of any of us. What general and complete disarmament *does* mean, at least to the negotiator and the statesman specifically concerned with these problems, is a world structure in which the size and power of national military establishments have been progressively decreased to a level at which they will be capable only of meeting the requirements of internal security and providing a residual ability to defend communities against attack from outside.

At the same time it will have been necessary to evolve an international system for preserving the international rule of law, for the settlement of disputes and for keeping the peace. This is, *a priori*, a system which will involve a substantial element of armed force. Just as a national police force relies in the last analysis upon the sanction of force to maintain the rule of law in the national community, so it will be necessary for an international police force to be able to apply or to threaten the sanction of force to preserve the rule of law in an international community. It can be argued that in a highly-articulated and sophisticated international society the sanction of *economic* and *political* pressure might eventually take the place of the sanction of force. But unless there is a major revolution in political philosophy and an unexpected transformation in the patterns of human behaviour, any international society will have to dispose of some sort of international police force. The size and scope of this police force and the nature of the weapons with which it is armed will of course have to be very carefully calculated but it seems clear that as a basic criterion it will have to be strong enough and well enough armed to defeat any possible combination or conspiracy of individuals or of nation states that might seek to upset the rule of international law.

THIS CONCEPT of general and complete disarmament, which lies behind the two existing draft treaties that have been tabled at the disarmament talks, one by the United States and one by the Soviet Union, modest an aim as it may be to some of the more passionate advocates of comprehensive disarmament, seems in itself very unlikely to be achieved in the near future. So far as the immediate political climate is concerned, the complex and interlocking power structure of the world is so impregnated with suspicion and mistrust, that it seems, on present evidence, unlikely that there will be within the next ten or fifteen years any serious move by the great powers towards any really substantial reduction of national military forces. One has only to consider the bitter ideological and political struggle between Communist China and the Soviet Union; the growing confrontation between the United States and China which has its focal point and possibly its flashpoint in the dangerous crisis in Viet Nam; the present consternation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, and the signs of spreading polycentrism in the Communist world to realise that the governments of most of the great countries of the world at the moment are far too preoccupied with questions of power politics and military security to give much serious attention to the possibility of comprehensive measures of disarmament.

This is not to say of course that any country would therefore be justified in forsaking the aim as one of the central elements of foreign

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policy, since the barriers to disarmament are entirely a matter of political will. If there *were* ever purely technical, as opposed to disguised political, obstacles in the way of general and complete disarmament—for instance, because of genuine belief that the means of verification would prove inadequate—these obstacles have now largely disappeared. The economic arguments against comprehensive disarmament have never been convincing. It has been suggested that to implement drastic measures of disarmament, especially in highly industrialised societies, would disrupt economies and create insoluble problems of unemployment and poverty. Most of the serious studies that have been done on this subject show this to be a fallacy. Just as highly industrialised economies were converted from an all-out war effort to a largely non-military and civilian basis at the end of the two great wars of this century, so it would be possible to convert existing military economies to a peaceful basis without serious economic and industrial disruption. It would of course be necessary to engage in a substantial degree of central planning and it would be necessary to spread the period of transition over several years. But neither of the disarmament plans at present tabled at Geneva visualises the achievement of general and complete disarmament, even after agreement had been reached, in less than five years; and in this time it should be within the power of an organised political community to divert its resources and its labour force from military to civilian activities.

THE DIFFICULTIES, therefore, in the way of disarmament are not technical and they are not economic. There remain the military arguments—the suggestion that disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, would be dangerous and "destabilising." It is suggested that a strategic stalemate has developed; that the possession by the two great power blocs of the world of the capacity to inflict incalculable and totally unacceptable destruction upon one another has provided a sort of nuclear umbrella, or balance of terror, in which nuclear war is impossible and even major conventional wars of the 1914 or 1939 type are extremely improbable. This impression of balance in strategic confrontation has brought about a relaxation in the sort of political activity that seeks resolution of international tensions; and there is a tendency to regard the nuclear stalemate as permanent and even comfortable, making serious measures of arms reduction not only unnecessary but undesirable or even positively dangerous.

This concept of the strategic balance, the permanent nuclear stalemate, is potentially a dangerous illusion. Even if it has existed in the twenty years since the end of the Second World War, it is arguable that it no longer exists. And it is more than arguable, it is clearly demonstrable, that the political and technological pressures of the next ten to fifteen years might well destroy it completely. It is, in fact, highly probable that we are moving into a period of unprecedented danger in the international balances of power.

Let us assume that there *is* a measure of uneasy stability at the moment. (It can hardly be said that the nuclear weapon has abolished war. There is after all one of the cruellest and most destructive wars of the century going on at this very moment in South-east Asia.) But let us argue that in terms of the larger political confrontations of the world there is a precarious and uneasy balance. How long is it likely to last? And what are the emergent factors in the world power structure that are likely to upset it?

Let us take first the central illusion of the theory of strategic balance—the illusion of bipolarity. This is based upon the assumption that the stability of the world depends entirely upon the equilibrium of confrontation between the two great nuclear super-powers—the United States and the Soviet Union and their allies. While this has arguably been the case for the last fifteen or twenty years, we cannot rely upon it being so for much longer.

The emergence of Communist China as a world power is likely to provide complications in the next ten or fifteen years which to say the least it would be very foolish to ignore. The simple recital of a few facts about China is enough to indicate its enormous potential. By most calculations it has a population now of about 700 million. It has one of the largest standing armies in the world. It has begun a series of nuclear tests, the very first of which turned out in the event to indicate a state of technological development which took most Western observers by surprise. Beyond these simple facts we can only speculate on crucial matters like the rate at which the population of China will grow, the way in which its military potential will develop and how it will use this

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military potential to support and develop its foreign policy and finally, of course, what that foreign policy is likely to be. There are those who argue that China has no sound economic or industrial base from which to build up an enormous military establishment or to develop a sophisticated nuclear weapons system. Others will say that provided the political decision is made there is no doubt that by the 1980s China could have not only the largest and most powerful organised army in the world but also a nuclear weapons system capable of inflicting extensive damage on any potential enemy, including the Soviet Union and the United States: and that its exploding population will drive it inexorably into expansionist and aggressive foreign policies, even if its ideologies do not.

The missing factor in all this speculation, of course, is any clear assessment of what exactly the aims of Communist China really are. It is comparatively easy to assess the current military capabilities of China and to make a series of extrapolations to show what those military capabilities might be in twenty years' time. What we are unable to do at present is to assess exactly how the foreign policy of China is likely to develop over the same period—whether to take just two over-simplified possibilities it is likely to be defensive or expansionist, nationalist or Marxist. This is a gap in our knowledge to which I should like to refer again a little later. At this stage my concern is to suggest that if China should wish to, there is no reason why she should not, before very long, decisively upset the entire strategic balance of the world and destroy the last illusions of a nuclear stalemate.

But it is of course not only China that erodes the transient bipolarity of the nuclear confrontation. Apart from the five existing nuclear powers there are a dozen or more countries in the world which have the technical, scientific and industrial base upon which to build a nuclear weapons system if they should consider it in their interests to do so. This possibility, usually referred to loosely as the problem of nuclear proliferation, I believe to contain within it the seeds of as great, if not a greater danger than the development of an effective Chinese nuclear capability. The danger of nuclear war by political miscalculation is likely to grow in direct proportion to the number of nuclear powers that exist in the world. I realise that there are cogent and often persuasive arguments against this view, but to me they are not convincing. So far those countries that *have* nuclear weapons are engaged in the major political and ideological confrontations of the day. All except China are members of the two principal military alignments—the Warsaw Pact and the Western Alliance. Many of those countries that are capable of making nuclear weapons—the potential or "near-nuclear" powers—are outside these major confrontations and some of them are engaged in bitter local rivalries. If a small country engaged in a direct confrontation with another small country in the same area should make or acquire a nuclear weapons system, the temptation to use it in pursuit of its immediate national aims might well become irresistible. And I think we should have no doubt in our minds that, if nuclear weapons were used in some local conflict, the possibility of containing that conflict would be remote. The great powers would almost certainly become involved and the threat of a major exchange of nuclear weapons would be enormously increased. Having expressed the belief that the spread of nuclear weapons from country to country would be a development of appalling danger, it is necessary to answer the question—is it likely to happen?

The crucial factor in this debate is the problem of the sixth nuclear power. It seems arguable that if we can prevent the present number of nuclear powers from increasing at all, the possibilities of keeping the international dialogue alive and of moving on to more comprehensive and effective measures of disarmament will remain. If, however, *one* more country decides to take the step of becoming a nuclear power then I believe that there will follow almost inevitably a sort of "domino effect" or "chain reaction." This may well mean that in ten or a dozen years after the emergence of the sixth nuclear power the number may grow to fifteen or even more. And here it might be worthwhile to interpolate a comment on the subject of so-called "peaceful nuclear explosions" or "plowshare" devices. I am sure that no one will be deceived if a non-nuclear country should carry out such a "peaceful explosion." Nor, I suspect, would the intention be to deceive anyone. A device that can shift a million tons of earth in a desert can shift it in the middle of a city. It is, for all practical purposes, a weapon; and if the number of nuclear weapon powers begins to grow, whether the fact is demonstrated by open weapons testing or by the fiction of peaceful explosions, the roads to

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disarmament—all roads—might be finally and irrevocably closed.

I HAVE REFERRED to the growth of Communist China and the possible spread of nuclear weapons as two of the greatest dangers to the precarious peace that most of us enjoy at the moment.

A third is the possibility of some great breakthrough in weapons technology. Already there are signs of a significant and qualitative change in the arms race amongst the advanced military nations. This is not so much a matter of nuclear technology as of a revolution in what are called military "systems." Spectacular advances in the techniques of computation and control within weapons systems, within military establishments, and within the industrial complexes that develop and manufacture military weapons systems are making possible the evolution of military mechanisms on a scale and complexity that up to now we have not been able to contemplate. This is a revolution that is particularly significant in such fields as the automated control of weapons systems, and one of the most significant developments in this field has been the advance towards a system of ballistic missile defence. Recent developments, some of them no more than a few months old, have revived and nourished the belief that it might after all be possible to develop an effective system of defence against ballistic missiles. Now there are a number of intricate and highly complicated arguments for and against the deployment of such defence if it should become scientifically possible. Without rehearsing all these arguments now I must say that in my view the trend towards ballistic missile defence is an extremely dangerous one.

I am not convinced that these defensive systems can ever be fully effective, and the result of deploying them would be to upset the strategic balance, to lift the arms race into a new and ruinously expensive dimension, and to create political and strategic problems that might well entirely disrupt existing systems of collective security. An even more disturbing possibility is that ballistic missile defence might inject into nuclear strategy the destabilising element of automatic response.

There is, I suggest, nothing inherently stable in the present strategic balance. And yet the penalties of any serious upset in that balance are now greater than they have ever been before. The enormous stockpiles of nuclear weapons that now exist are capable of creating destruction on a scale that no one can even remotely imagine. We are moving into a period of great and growing danger and the immediate and urgent question that we must ask ourselves is what can be done in the field of foreign policy and international relations to reduce those dangers and to make the world a less precarious place to live in.

SO FAR AS the actual growth and development of Communist China is concerned it is a phenomenon that we can do very little about, even if we should want to. We cannot, by any means that any civilised person or government would contemplate, halt the development of Communist China or the growth of its military potential.

I believe that what we can do, however, is to try to exercise some influence upon the way in which it uses that power. We shall not be able to do this so long as China remains isolated from the community of nations as a whole. There can be no substantial improvement in the international political climate until China is brought into international negotiations. There can be no serious attempt at comprehensive disarmament so long as China remains disinterested in the subject. One of the first steps towards bringing China into the normal traffic of international affairs is to bring China into the United Nations. There are, of course, obvious difficulties in the way of what seems such a clearly desirable step. There is the problem of what happens to Chiang Kai-shek's régime. It seems evident at the present that Communist China would not contemplate taking a seat in the United Nations alongside the Chinese nationalists; it is, indeed, doubtful whether Peking is seriously interested in the United Nations while the United States maintains its present military and political posture in Asia. The very least the rest of the world can do is to find some way of removing the obstacles to Chinese admission. If Peking then refuses to come through the open door it will be clear for everyone to see where the blame really lies.

Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is a more subtle and complex problem. It will only be done in the context of an effective and comprehensive non-proliferation strategy which will have to include an effective non-proliferation treaty, an end to all nuclear testing, including the testing of weapons underground, and acceptance by the nuclear powers of the world of the

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fact that they cannot expect the non-nuclear powers to engage in a permanent self-denying ordinance while the arms race amongst the nuclear powers continues. This is not to suggest that all these measures should be included in one large cumbersome and hard-to-negotiate package deal; but simply to say that if the nuclear powers want to persuade the potential nuclear powers to sign a treaty of non-proliferation they will themselves have to show some signs of flexibility and good intent. The nuclear powers themselves will have to find some way of at least freezing the level of their nuclear armaments and eventually of making some positive reduction in their stockpiles and weapons systems. The difficulties in all these areas of disarmament and arms control are of course enormous. One of the most obvious is the need for each step in the disarmament process to be effectively controlled and verified. But there are other problems as well. Apart from the general cloak of inhibition cast over disarmanent negotiations by the war in Viet Nam, each single avenue towards even the most modest and partial measures of disarmament seems for the moment to be blocked by formidable obstacles.

The search for agreement on a non-proliferation treaty between the Soviet Union and the West has run aground on the rocks of Russian mistrust of Western Germany and the Russian belief that the Western Alliance is bent upon a course of action that will result in giving West Germany what they call access to nuclear weapons. Here I think it important to say that the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany have consistently made it clear that they have no appetite for nuclear weapons. And no plan exists in the Western Alliance that would allow the control of nuclear weapons to pass out of the hands of those who exercise it at present. This is not to suggest that there is not room for flexible and imaginative policies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Two distinguished Americans have already pointed the way. Speaking in the United States Senate in June, 1965, Mr. Robert Kennedy said:

> But if a non-proliferation treaty can be concluded, it will be in the national interest of every nation. We should therefore continue with increased concern, our search for a form of nuclear guarantee to West Germany and other countries of Europe which meets their needs without meeting with rejection by the Soviet Union—such as might evolve from the allied consultation device suggested at the NATO meeting by Defense Secretary McNamara.

In June of this year Dr. Henry Kissinger, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was rather more specific: speaking of plans for joint nuclear forces he said:

> As I have already pointed out, the so-called "hardware solution" does not seem to me fruitful. Since the problem is essentially political, the Special (McNamara) Committee should be given every opportunity to work and should be expanded to include political functions.

SO FAR AS a comprehensive test ban is concerned the possibility of an agreement to ban the testing of nuclear weapons underground remains remote so long as the Soviet Union and the West cannot agree upon effective methods of inspection and verification. So far the West insists upon a number of "on-site" inspections to guard against any clandestine breach of an underground test ban; while the Soviet Union insists that such inspections are no longer necessary and refuses unequivocally to accept them. Here, again, there is more room for manoeuvre than is immediately apparent in these rigid positions. Proposals for international processing of seismic data—the raw material of scientific techniques for detecting and identifying underground explosions without "on-site" inspection—have been put forward in the disarmament negotiations in Geneva; and the International Assembly on Nuclear Weapons, a non-official meeting of disarmament experts held in Toronto in June this year, set out a proposal for a trial period of agreement not to test nuclear weapons underground, coupled with an idea for verification by a system of challenges and invitations. It is significant that the plan was put forward by an American and received with encouraging interest by the Russian scientists and diplomats at the Assembly.

Measures of nuclear disarmament among the nuclear powers, although these might make it easier for non-nuclear powers to sign a non-proliferation treaty, would also make it more difficult for the nuclear powers to extend a guarantee to a non-nuclear power against the possibility of attack or blackmail by a nuclear power that had not signed the non-proliferation treaty. The position of India and China in this context is obviously of crucial importance. Apart from this sort of inhibition, any serious deployment of anti-ballistic missile defences would clearly make discussion of nuclear disarmament academic for many years. Although the dangers of this have been the subject of much discussion in the press, in diplomatic exchanges and in

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disarmament negotiations (perhaps the most significant contribution to the debate being a speech by the United States delegate to the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee in August) there is no sign of any imminent agreement, tacit or otherwise, not to develop ballistic missile defences.

By any standards the picture at present seems on the surface to be a gloomy one. The possibility of agreement on general and complete disarmament seems remote. And even progress on the most modest measures of arms control designed to reduce the danger and destructiveness of war seems for the moment to be blocked by insuperable obstacles.

Is it possible to trace any lines of foreign policy, any future patterns in international relations that might break this tragic deadlock? In the immediate future it seems clear that the key lies with the United States and the Soviet Union. For too long these two countries, and the alliances that have grown up around them, have been locked in a confrontation across central Europe that owes much of its rigidity to a whole set of old-fashioned and obsolete cold war clichés and assumptions. The problems of the last quarter of the twentieth century will not be problems of Central Europe. The danger that the Red Army will flood across the river Elbe and engulf the whole of Western Europe is no longer the threat that it was thought to be in the cold war years. And the idea that the armies of NATO will engage in any schemes to roll back the frontiers of the Warsaw Pact is utterly unreal. This is not to say that we can at once dissolve our military alliances because the military threats have receded. Of course the process of disarmament is bound to include the progressive erosion of military alliances, which are irrelevant to a disarmed world. For the moment, however, alliances are necessary defensive organisations. But we must regard them not just in that light.

They are even more essential as a base for the development and co-ordination of rational foreign policies. The real problems that will confront us in the last quarter of this century are not those of central Europe; they are the problems of the third world of Africa and Asia —the problems of developing nations, the problem of exploding populations, the problems of race and the feeding of hungry millions. The great confrontations that will grow out of that will not be those between capitalism and communism, between the planned society and private enterprise; the great confrontations will be between the prosperous countries and the poor, between the complacent and the oppressed and possibly, unless we begin to conduct our international affairs in a more intelligent manner, the most appalling conflict of all—that between the coloured peoples and the white. If this broad diagnosis is valid it seems self-evident that the United States and its allies on the one hand and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other must free themselves from their cold war prison and find together some common ground for dealing with these problems. The improvement of East-West relations in Europe is no longer simply an option of foreign policy. It is an imperative historical necessity.

In the long run even this will not be enough. It will be no use exchanging one confrontation for another or one cold war for another.

We shall have to assist at a political revolution if we are to control the instruments of military power that have come with the scientific revolution. It will be no good, for example, preventing the spread of nuclear weapons if in order to do so we have to deny to developing countries the immeasurable advantages of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We shall have to face and solve problems of great complexity—how, for example, to deal with plutonium—a commodity that is essential for the fuelling of the new generation of fast breeder reactors, but which is also the basic and significant ingredient of an atomic bomb; and how to deal with the problem of the "Plowshare" nuclear explosion without depriving non-nuclear countries of what might seem, to them at any rate, to be a revolutionary and indispensable engineering device?

EVEN IF we can solve some of the immediate problems and remove some of the more pressing dangers to survival, we shall still be faced with the need to construct an international society relevant to the sources of power, both peaceful and military, which we can now deploy. We cannot afford to go on conducting international affairs according to the political philosophies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We must begin to look seriously at social, political and even scientific concepts that have long been acceptable and familiar to us—concepts like the sanctity of the nation state, nationalism, patriotism and the assumption that the conduct of human affairs is necessarily a function of aggressive instinct and of recurrent conflict and tension.

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ONE THING, however, seems to stand out above all the others in our approach to the political attitudes of the future. It is that before we can move from the out-dated but still prevalent concept of the nation state, even tentatively, towards the ideal of world government, we must first begin to accept that relations between states should be conducted on a basis of morality at least as binding as that which governs the conduct of affairs between individual human beings. As Henry Stimson once said, the nuclear weapon "constitutes merely a first step in a new control by man over the forces of nature too revolutionary and dangerous to fit into the old concepts... it really caps the climax of the race between man's growing technical power for destructiveness and his psychological power of self-control and group control—his moral power." We cannot accept indefinitely the Spinozan concept that a nation can lie and cheat and steal and kill so long as it does it in the interest of its citizens.

Nor can we be uncritical of the Hobbesian proposition that the citizen bears an unlimited liability to the state so long as the state is able to protect him and his interests. We have to be critical if only because it is extremely doubtful that the nation state acting independently can any longer guarantee either the survival or the prosperity of the individual. This guarantee may have been relevant to the world in which bows and arrows, or cannon, or even thousand-bomber raids were the limit of one nation's frightfulness in pursuit of another. In the day of the hydrogen bomb it is a philosophy of despair and disintegration. As that most compassionate of American statesmen Adlai Stevenson has said, "It took a scientific revolution to produce the nuclear weapon; it will take a political revolution to control it."

In the long term the sort of changes in group behaviour and national attitudes necessary to sustain such a revolution will clearly be a matter of education in the very broadest sense. This will involve, as a basic element, a new approach to the formal education of children. The "crazy combative patriotism" to which H. G. Wells referred is, in his view, a by-product of the history lessons at school which "take the growing mind at a naturally barbaric phase and... inflame and fix its barbarism." There is a clear need to teach children less of the moral asymmetry of national power politics and more of what makes human beings behave as they do because they are human beings, not because they are Englishmen or Germans or Chinese. As Dr. Hans Thirring powerfully argues, if children are to grow up to be citizens of a world community their education must be international.

There is much more to the process of education than the syllabuses and textbooks of schools. A remarkable study in *New Society* of 7th July brought home the need to question the scale of values that allows young minds to be influenced by "war comics" and other pulp magazines into accepting blindly the national stereotypes of the Japs, the Jerries, and the Reds. The study concluded that the effect upon children of reading this sort of material is far from trivial and that it may also be long lasting.

The development of new political philosophies and new insights into individual and group psychology, international systems of education and the perfection of supra-national organisations are essential elements in any comprehensive pursuit of peace; but the safety of mankind is too precariously balanced to allow us the luxury of long-term thinking and planning without the need for urgent action. The political revolution must begin soon if, as Pandit Nehru believed, the human spirit is to prevail over the nuclear weapons. The first signs that the revolution has begun will be the acceptance by the great powers of the risks—political and military—without which the most modest steps in arms control and disarmament are impossible. Unless we are prepared to take these risks it must be said, as soberly and undramatically as it is possible to make such a statement, that we may not survive much longer.

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Some Stevens Letters

WALLACE STEVENS was born on 2 October 1879. His father was a lawyer and small businessman in Reading, Pennsylvania, his mother a Zeller, of Dutch descent. It was a reading household, and one in which the children were taught the importance of making one's way in the world; but it seems not to have been opposed to a certain gaudiness and gaiety of language. At sixteen the poet, writing from his grandmother's house in the country, describes to his mother "the piping of flamboyant flutes, the wriggling of shrieking fifes with rasping dagger-voices, the sighing of bass-viols, drums that beat and rattle, the crescendo of cracked trombones," in a local band, runs through the detail of the house in the same style, and describes himself as "jeune." But he was to reach his thirties before gaudiness rubbed off the prose on to the verse.

At Harvard (1897–1900) he was President of the *Advocate* and kept a journal, but did little in poetry to confute his father's opinion that "the afflatus is not serious." It is interesting to learn that he disliked "art for art's sake," writing in his Journal that "art must fit in with other things, it must be part of the system of the world" (29 March 1899); it could be maintained, against the common view, that he stuck to this always. After Harvard he tried to make a living by writing, but although he enjoyed living in New York ("this electric town that I adore") there were not enough journalistic assignments, and he entered New York Law School in 1901. He spent three hard-working and solitary years there. "The old Biblical injunctions to make the earth fertile and to earn one's bread in the sweat of one's brow are one's first instructions," he noted in April 1903. "Here I am, a descendant of the Dutch, at the age of twenty-five, without a cent to my name, in a huge town, knowing a half-dozen men and no women" (7 February 1904). There were long solitary walks: "How clean and precise the lines of the world are early in the morning! The light is perfect—absolute. . . ." (18 April 1904).

In 1904 he met his future wife, and money became more important, "my thoughts must be constantly on that subject," (24 March 1907) but his own practice was not successful and he became a company lawyer. The Journal and letters to his wife occasionally offer pre-echoes of the poetry to come: "Your letter was in major, the weather is in major . . ." (19 January 1909; see *Collected Poems*, p. 404, etc.). He married in 1909.

In view of the common curiosity about the combination in Stevens' life of metropolitan poetry and provincial insurance, it is interesting that his success in both worlds began at much the same time; he joined the Hartford Accident and Indemnity in August, 1913, and was soon appearing in *Poetry*, writing the poems which would be collected in *Harmonium* (1923) and discussing them with Harriet Monroe. These letters are the first of a great many in which Stevens, contrary to the practice of most modern poets, freely discussed with scholars and enthusiasts the interpretation of his poems.

In 1915 he dined with Duchamp and looked at his things, "but naturally, being without sophistication in that direction, and with only a rudimentary feeling about art, I expect little of myself" (3 August 1915)—which is evidence not only of modesty but of the curiously late maturing of a taste. Another significant

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moment in this period was the first visit to Florida in 1916; Florida, both gaudy and real, had the other charm that it was an extremity. Except for brief visits to Canada, Cuba and Mexico Stevens never left the U.S. and the causes of and compensations for this abstinence are a persistent theme in the letters; requests to travellers to send him this or that are common, and he had a long relationship with a Parisian bookseller called Vidal.

By the 'twenties Stevens was a recognised poet, though *Harmonium* was not very warmly received. His daughter, born in 1924, absorbed much attention, he read a lot, and he had grown more interested in gardening. The second edition of *Harmonium* (1931) contained only fourteen more poems. But there followed a second and very prolific phase "writing after a discontinuance seems to take one back to the beginning rather than to the point of discontinuance," (13 March 1933), and thenceforward verse and letters evidently poured out with ever-increasing fluency till his death in 1955.

This very brief selection begins in the 'thirties. I have tried to represent the kind of letter Stevens wrote about his own poetry, about other writers, and about politics. Some of the comments on his own poetry make very long letters; a selection cannot do justice to them, nor to the warmth and the special tones he displays in letters to the favoured correspondents of his late years, notably Barbara Church, José Rodríguez Feo, and Thomas McGreevey. On contemporary American writers—Tate and Ransom, Blackmur and Winters, Williams and Marianne Moore—he is lively and decided, though sometimes inconsistent. The range of his interests is wide, and the letters certainly enrich one's sense of his "presiding personality," while leaving the impression of a solitary, sometimes naïve, always inward person, finding France in cheese, Japan in dolls, yet with an incessant passion for the "real." A domesticated Des Esseintes needing a conjunction between his fictions and the nine-to-five world, he wrote his poems while walking to the office and dictated them to his secretary.

All letters here reprinted were written either from the poet's office or his house in Hartford. Except for one, duly identified, the notes are Mrs. Stephenson's; *N.A.* is *The Necessary Angel* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951; London: Faber & Faber, 1960); *C.P.* stands for *Collected Poems* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954; London: Faber & Faber, 1955). For reasons of space I have omitted some of the notes which will appear in the book.

The first batch is from Stevens' correspondence with Ronald Lane Latimer, of the Alcestis Press. Henceforward Stevens had many dealings with private presses; one very obliging letter to the Cummington Press offers to trim any line of *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction* that looks like causing a turnover and making the page unsightly. And he made up for his avoidance of publicity and unwillingness to talk about his work by writing about it, to friend and stranger, in a remarkably uninhibited manner. Of such letters only those to Poggioli were hitherto at all well known; but he and Latimer were only two among many who received letters of this kind.

F.K.

To Ronald Lane Latimer

October 22, 1935

I HAVE READ [Ronald] Firbank's novels, but have long since sent the lot of them to the attic. There may be some similarity between his work and mine, but certainly there is no relation between the two things. This is extremely interesting. It raises the question why one writes as one does. To my way of thinking, there is not the slightest affectation in anything that I do. I write as I do, not because that satisfies me, but because no other way satisfies me. It is curious to think of the possibility that Firbank wrote in the way he wrote for the same reason.

You will find occasional references in my poems to the normal. With me, how to write of the normal in a normal way is a problem which I have long since given up trying to solve, because I never feel that I am in the area of poetry until I am a little off the normal.[1] The worst part of this aberration is that I am convinced that it is not an aberration.

The pseudo-primitive of which you speak is, I am afraid, unconscious. An expression like "animal eyes"[2] expresses a feeling, an impression. I don't know what to make of this question except to say that I am not aware that this sort of thing has any philosophic function. It is purely stylistic. . . .

[1] In a letter to Lester Littlefield, 27 April 1935, Stevens said: "Everything is incidental to the normal, not the abnormal. The remarks that you have sent me merely mean that a certain amount of the abnormal is also incidental to the normal; and that, of course, is true."

[2] See "Gubbinal," *C.P.*, 85.

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October 31, 1935

ABOUT Tehuantepec:[3] all I know about the place is that one crosses the Bay or Gulf of Tehuantepec on the way to California, so that being "off Tehuantepec" is not merely something that I have imagined.

I am not particularly fond of reading travel books. The truth is that I no longer read a great deal of anything. I buy a good many books; I read very few of them.

This leaves two questions: whether I accept the common opinion that my verse is essentially decorative, and whether my landscapes are real or imagined. I have delayed answering your letter because I was on the point of saying that I did not agree with the opinion that my verse is decorative, when I remembered that when *Harmonium* was in the making there was a time when I liked the ideas of images and images alone, or images and the music of verse together. I then believed in *pure poetry*, as it was called.

I still have a distinct liking for that sort of thing. But we live in a different time, and life means a good deal more to us nowadays than literature does. In the period of which I have just spoken, I thought literature meant most. Moreover, I am not so sure that I don't think exactly the same thing now, but, unquestionably, I think at the same time that life is the essential part of literature.

Again, life is the normal thing to which I referred in my last letter to you. I don't at all like the words *decorative* and *formal*. Here in Hartford one gets a different reaction; here people who speak about the thing at all speak of my verse as aesthetic. But I don't like any labels, because I am not doing one thing all the time; it may look very much like one thing, just as it seems to be entirely without ideas, which, from my point of view, is ridiculously wrong. However, for all that, it is ridiculously wrong to object to such comments.

While, of course, my imagination is a most important factor, nevertheless I wonder whether, if you were to suggest any particular poem, I could not find an actual background for you. I have been going to Florida for twenty years, and all of the Florida poems have actual backgrounds. The real world seen by an imaginative man may very well seem like an imaginative construction.

However, I cannot go into this any farther without thinking it out a good deal more closely than would be of any use. I have just finished a poem that might be of some interest. You will remember that Mr. Burnshaw applied the point of view of the practical Communist to *Ideas of Order*;[4] in *Mr. Burnshaw and the Statue* I have tried to reverse the process: that is to say, apply the point of view of a poet to Communism. Even in its present condition I should be able to trace a process of thought: analyse for you what I have written, and by that means illustrate by a poem which might seem largely gaseous the sort of contact that I make with normal ideas. However, the poem is a source of a good deal of trouble to me at the moment, because, having purposely used a good many stock figures (what is now called *Victorian ideology*) it seems most un-Burnshawesque. I cannot tell what I shall do about it until I have tinkered with it a bit; it may be better to leave it as it is.

These remarks alone will show that my principal concern with this poem (and, I suppose, with any poem) is not so much with the ideas as with the poetry of the thing. I came across an amusing incident of the opposite in an English paper the other night: [Sir James George] Frazer, the *Golden Bough* man, wrote a poem for the purpose of calling Mussolini a dirty dog. It was a typical poem of ideas. Frazer was not enough of a poet to make a go of it, but if he had been: if he had been able to express the very general condemnation of Mussolini (I am pro-Mussolini personally), he would have been a typical poet of ideas. I cannot say that I do not think such a poet should be the chief figure among poets. Unfortunately, I don't have ideas that are permanently fixed. My conception of what I think a poet should be and do changes, and I hope, constantly grows.

November 26, 1935

THE MUSIC OF POETRY which creates its own fictions is one of the "sisterhood of the living dead."[5] It is a muse: all of the muses are of that sisterhood. But then I cannot say, at this distance of time, that I specifically meant the muses; this is just an explanation. I don't think that I meant anything definitely except all the things that live in memory and imagination.

Titles with me are, of course, of the highest importance. Some years ago a student of Wesleyan came up to the office. Apparently he had been given the job of writing a paper on *Harmonium*. He was under the impression that there was no relation whatever between the titles and the poems. Possibly the relation is not as direct and as literal as it ought to be. Very often the title occurs to me before any-

[3] See "Sea Surface Full of Clouds," *C.P.*, 98–102.

[4] For a clarification of this often misrepresented passage between W.S. and Burnshaw, see the latter's essay "Wallace Stevens and the Statue," *Sewanee Review*, Summer, 1961. F.K.

[5] See "To the One of Fictive Music," *C.P.*, 87–8.

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thing else occurs to me. This is not uncommon; I knew a man in New York who ought to know who once told me that many more people have written the first chapters of novels than have written the rest of them, and that still more people have given their novels titles without having given them any bodies.

When you ask about a pattern of metaphors you are asking about the sort of thing with which one constantly experiments. For instance, I am very much afraid that what you like in my poetry is just the sort of thing that you ought not to like: say, its music or colour. If that is true, then an appropriate experiment would be to write poetry without music and without colour. But so many of these experiments come to nothing. If they were highly successful, well and good, but they so rarely are.

I suppose that the explanation for the bursts of freedom is nothing more than this: that when one is thinking one's way the pattern becomes small and complex, but when one has reached a point and finds it possible to move emotionally one goes ahead rapidly. One of the most difficult things in writing poetry is to know what one's subject is. Most people know what it is and do not write poetry, because they are so conscious of that one thing. One's subject is always poetry, or should be. But sometimes it becomes a little more definite and fluid, and then the thing goes ahead rapidly.

December 19, 1935

JUST HOW it comes about that my vocabulary is more Latin than Teutonic, I don't know. Perhaps there may be something in the idea that the language of poetry is never Teutonic. It may even be said that the sound of German poetry is not Teutonic. The Teutonic makes a very good foil in the music of Sibelius; the heavy Teutonic characteristics are not what constitute its poetry: the poetry arises as the strings rise from that volume of sound. This is simply an off-hand remark; I don't want anything that I say in these letters to be regarded as anything more than a bit of letter writing.

For instance, in my last letter I said that poetry undoubtedly creates what it seeks. As a matter of fact, your question raised the rather ancient question of aesthetic causation: does a poem about some natural object emanate from the object or from the poet? I like the sound of Latin and all I have said is that I like it. The whole question is why I like it. I don't know, and I cannot be asked to fast at Christmas time for the purpose of finding out.

Your question whether art is to a greater or lesser extent didactic is another fundamental question. It might even be said to be the initial question in any aesthetic catechism. A good many people think that I am didactic. I don't want to be. My own idea about it is that my real danger is not didacticism, but abstraction, and abstraction looks very much like didacticism. It may be because the didactic mind reduces the world to principles or uses abstractions. Whether beauty is roused by passion or whether passion is roused by beauty is pretty much the same thing as the question whether a poem about a natural object is roused by the natural object or whether the natural object is clothed with its poetic characteristics by the poet. While I brush that sort of thing aside, it is not because I am not interested. But I feel very much like the boy whose mother told him to stop sneezing; he replied: "I am not sneezing; it's sneezing me."

If one could truly play the role of poet with all the books, giving one's lifetime to it, leading the special life that a poet should lead, reaching out after every possible experience, questions of this sort would be commonplaces. They are, in fact, commonplaces now, but I am dealing with my own experience. I think that things come both from within and from without.

Imagism was a mild rebellion against didacticism. However, you will find that any continued reading of pure poetry is rather baffling. Everything must go on at once. There must be pure poetry and there must be a certain amount of didactic poetry, or a certain amount of didacticism in poetry. Poetry is like anything else; it cannot be made suddenly to drop all its rags and stand out naked, fully disclosed. Everything is complicated; if that were not so, life and poetry and everything else would be a bore.

I am not quite sure that I understood what you have in mind with respect to palatability. You may mean *mignardise*. Poulenc is a beautiful instance of *mignardise* in music. He will take a perfectly good thing and conclude it with a phrase that is meant to be the last word in a job of seduction. After you have heard the thing several times, it becomes intolerable. This leads to an antithetical commonplace; the unpalatable will often become what is most enduringly palatable. In any case, the remark will serve to turn the idea over. [. . .]

May 6, 1937

GIVING UP The Alcestis Press must be to you what giving up any idea of writing poetry would be to me. Nevertheless, a good many years ago, when I really was a poet in the

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sense that I was all imagination, and so on, I deliberately gave up writing poetry because, much as I loved it, there were too many other things I wanted not to make an effort to have them. I wanted to do everything that one wants to do at that age: live in a village in France, in a hut in Morocco, or in a piano box at Key West. But I didn't like the idea of being bedevilled all the time about money and I didn't for a moment like the idea of poverty, so I went to work like anybody else and kept at it for a good many years. . . .

*

THE NEXT BATCH shows Stevens' willingness to discuss his work with different correspondents. John Pauker, who was writing an essay on "Sea Surface Full of Clouds," was an undergraduate at Yale. Hi Simons was a Chicago businessman who wrote several of the more important early articles on Stevens. He was later to receive the author's very detailed commentary on *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction* and on other poems. After Simons' death Stevens continued to write to his widow. Harvey Breit had approached Stevens about a project for *Harper's Bazaar*; unsuccessfully, but the correspondence flourished. Henry Church (who had tried to interest Stevens in a Chair of Poetry he was thinking of establishing at Princeton) was one of the poet's closer friends.

To JOHN PAUKER

June 3, 1941

FIRST ABOUT FLOTILLAS: you are in much too close focus. As I used the word, it means merely floating things.

Then about Chinese chocolate: it may be that this is what may be called an embryo for charivari. The words are used in a purely expressive sense and are meant to connote a big Chinese with a very small cup of chocolate: something incongruous.

It is very easy to say that the poem, starting with the discovery of one's own soul as the thing of primary importance in a world of flux, proceeds to the ultimate discovery of *mon esprit bâtard* as the final discovery. In that sense the poem has a meaning and the final section represents a summation. You appear to regard this, or some substitute for it, as giving the poem a validity that it would not possess as pure poetry.

As a matter of fact, from my point of view, the quality called poetry is quite as precious as meaning. The truth is that, since I am far more interested in poetry than I am in philosophy, it is even more precious. But it would take a lot of letter-writing to get anywhere with this.

If the purity of a poem is a question not of the detachment of the poem but of the detachment that it produces in the reader, it is obvious that the repetition of a theme and the long-drawn-out rhythm that results from the repetition are merely mechanisms. But this again gets one into a lot of theory.

I hope that this answers the questions that you intended to ask. Just one thing more: your remark that the final authority is always the poet is one of the things that I am given to contradicting. The final authority is the poem itself.

I remember that when I wrote this particular poem I was doing a great deal of theorising about poetry, but actually I have not the faintest recollection of what theory prompted that particular poem. What I intended is nothing. A critic would never be free to speak his own mind if it was permissible for the poet to say that he intended something else. A poet, or any writer, must be held to what he puts down on the page. This does not mean that, if the critic happens to know the intention of the poet, it is not legitimate for him to make use of it, but it does mean that, if he does not happen to know, it is not of the slightest consequence that he should know, even if what he says the poem means is just the reverse of what the poet intended it to mean. The basis of criticism is the work, not the hidden intention of the writer.

To HI SIMONS

July 8, 1941

I AM RELIEVED to have your letter, since I was afraid that something said in my last letter to you might have gone wrong.

I have read something, more or less, of all the French poets mentioned by you,[6] but, if I have picked up anything from them, it has been unconsciously. It is always possible that, where a man's attitude coincides with your own attitude, or accentuates your own attitude, you get a great deal from him without any effort. This, in fact, is one of the things that makes literature possible. However, I don't remember any discussion of French poets; at the time when Walter Arensberg was doing his translation of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* I knew that he was doing it, and that is about all. I am quite sure too that all that Pitts [Sanborn] ever said about blue[7] was a casual remark by

[6] The poets mentioned were Mallarmé, Verlaine, Laforgue, Valéry, and Baudelaire.

[7] Simons had suggested that Stevens and Sanborn had "worked out" the symbolism of blue in Stevens' poetry together.

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way of expressing his boredom. The sort of literary conversation that you suggest in your letter is the last thing in the world that I should be likely to engage in, except casually and quickly. In any case, I am not a good talker and don't particularly enjoy exchanging ideas with people in talk. At home, our house was rather a curious place, with all of us in different parts of it, reading.

There is very little news: not so long ago I received a letter from Latimer, who has turned Buddhist, and is a monk or priest in one of the temples at Tokio. Latimer is an extraordinary person who lives in an extraordinary world.

Then, only this morning, I received a letter from one of my friends in Ceylon.[8] I am going to let you read this. The writer is an Oxford man who has been out there for a good many years, growing coconuts. His family live in Colombo, but he himself spends most of his time on the job. I think you can patch the rest of him together from this letter. Please send the letter back to me within a day or two, so that I shall have it nearby next time I have a letter-writing day.

The only two things concerning myself that might be of interest to you are that there is rather a longish poem in a volume called *Poems* 1940;[9] there have been some odds and ends elsewhere. In May I went down to Princeton and read a paper which is going to be published in a small group of papers by the University Press in the autumn.[10] No one would be likely to suppose from that paper what a lot of serious reading it required preceding it, and how much time it took. It was worth doing (for me), although the visit to Princeton gave me a glimpse of a life which I am profoundly glad that I don't share. The people I met were the nicest people in the world, but how they keep alive is more than I can imagine.

To Harvey Breit

July 29, 1942

.... You MUST know without my telling you how one struggles to suppress the merely personal. Having disciplined myself to that over a long period of time, how can I be expected to be indifferent? Again, I want to keep out of all that. And still again, one is not a lawyer one minute and a poet the next. You said in your first letter something about a point at which I turned from being a lawyer to writing poetry. There never was any such point. I have always been intensely interested in poetry, even when I was a boy. While I don't know you, I haven't the slightest doubt that that is also true of yourself.

No one could be more earnest about anything than I am about poetry, but this is not due to any event or exercise of will; it is a natural development of an interest that always existed. Moreover, I don't have a separate mind for legal work and another for writing poetry. I do each with my whole mind, just as you do everything that you do with your whole mind.

I think that your real subject is the destroying of the caricature in people's minds that exists there as the image of the poet. You say in your letter that there are thousands of people who ...

> "can't reconcile a man of sound logic with the exploration of the imagination,"

and who think ...

> "that a poet is altogether an idler, a man without clothes, a drunk, a 'fantast'—or on the other hand he is an untouchable, a seer."

The peculiar thing about all this is that the people of sound logic whom I know, and I know lots of them, don't really think of a poet as an idler, a man without clothes, a drunk, etc. The conception of the figure of the poet has changed and is changing every day. It was only a few years ago when Joaquin Miller or Walt Whitman were considered to be approximations of a typical image. But were they? Weren't they recognised by people of any sense at all as, personally, poseurs? They belong in the same category of eccentrics to which queer-looking actors belong. When you think of an actor, do you think of him as the typical figure or do you think of him in terms of the ordinary men and women round you? Assuming that you think of him in the terms of the ordinary men and women round you, why shouldn't you think of a poet in the same way: in terms of the ordinary men and women round you?

As a matter of fact, the conception of poetry itself has changed and is changing every day. Poetry is a thing that engages, or should engage, not the human curiosities to whom you have referred, but men of serious intelligence. I think that every poet of any interest considers himself a person concerned with something essential and vital. That such a person is to be visualised as "an idler, a man without clothes, a drunk" or in any way as an eccentric or a person somehow manqué is nonsense. The contemporary poet is simply a contem-

[8] Leonard C. van Geyzel.

[9] "Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas," *C.P.*, 252–9.

[10] "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words," *N.A.*, 1–36.

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porary man who writes poetry. He looks like anyone else, acts like anyone else, wears the same kind of clothes, and certainly is not an incompetent.

I hate to let you down and I have written this letter so that, if you care to do so, you can quote from it, or quote all of it. But I am definitely against an interview and photographs and that sort of thing. You say that your article is "essentially an idea." This is at least a contribution to your idea. If we could get rid of all the caricatures of the past: the caricatures not only of the poet and the actor but also the caricatures of the business man and the barkeeper and of a lot of other people, we should only be seeing what we see every day, which is not so easy after all....

August 8, 1942

YOUR LETTER making the most of the situation (which for your sake I regret) is quite the nicest and most human thing I know about you. In return for it, let me say this:

I have been away the last day or two and, while away, visited the Dutch Church at Kingston: the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. This is one of the most beautiful churches that I know of. It is improved by the fact that it has a pleasant janitor with a red nose: merely a red nose, not a red nose due to drink. But having a red nose subdues one.

The janitor told me that at one time there were nine judges in the congregation and that often the whole nine of them were there together at a service, sitting in their separate pews. One of them was Judge Alton Parker; another was Judge Gilbert Hasbrouck. Now, Judge Hasbrouck was as well known in Kingston as Martin Luther was in Wittenberg.

The janitor gave me a pamphlet containing an extract from studies relating to the Reformed Church. The pamphlet consists of an article by Judge Hasbrouck on this particular church. It starts out with this...

> Indeed when Spinoza's great logic went searching for God it found Him in a predicate of substance.

The material thing: the predicate of substance in this case, was this church: the very building. Now, if a lawyer as eminent as Judge Hasbrouck went to church because it made it possible for him to touch, to see, etc., the very predicate of substance, do you think he was anything except a poet? He was only one of nine of them, so that, instead of nine judges, there were nine poets in the congregation, all of them struggling to get at the predicate of substance, although not all of them struggled to do so through Spinoza's great logic.

Another thing that this episode makes clear is that Spinoza's great logic was appreciated only the other day in Kingston; and, still more, that lawyers very often make use of their particular faculties to satisfy their particular desires.

TO HENRY CHURCH

December 8, 1942

... IT IS ONLY when you try to systematise the poems in the *Notes* that you conclude that it is not the statement of a philosophic theory. A philosopher is never at rest unless he is systematising: constructing a theory. But these are Notes: the nucleus of the matter is contained in the title. It is implicit in the title that there can be such a thing as a supreme fiction.

One evening, a week or so ago, a student at Trinity College came to the office and walked home with me. We talked about this book. I said that I thought we had reached a point at which we could no longer really believe in anything unless we recognised that it was a fiction. The student said that that was an impossibility, that there was no such thing as believing in something that one knew was not true. It is obvious, however, that we are doing that all the time. There are things with respect to which we willingly suspend disbelief; if there is instinctive in us a will to believe, or if there is a will to believe whether or not it is instinctive, it seems to me that we can suspend disbelief with reference to a fiction as easily as we can suspend it with reference to anything else. There are fictions that are extensions of reality. There are plenty of people who believe in Heaven as definitely as your New England ancestors and my Dutch ancestors believed in it. But Heaven is an extension of reality.

I have no idea of the form that a supreme fiction would take. The *Notes* start out with the idea that it would not take any form: that it would be abstract. Of course, in the long run, poetry would be the supreme fiction; the essence of poetry is change and the essence of change is that it gives pleasure.

There is a magazine being published at Princeton called *Chimera*. They asked me some time ago for a poem and I sent them a thing called "The Motive for Metaphor." This is an illustration of the last remark that the essence of change is that it gives pleasure: that it exhilarates, so that, after all, with very little in the *Notes* to go by, there is a theory. But the *Notes* are a miscellany in which it would be difficult to collect the theory latent in them. For instance, if we are willing to believe in fiction as an extension of reality, or even as a

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thing itself in which we must believe, the next consideration is the question of illusion as value. Under the name of escapism this is one of the problems that bothers people. The poem about Ozymandias[11] is an illustration of illusion as value.

It is true that the articulations between the poems are not the articulations that one would expect to find between paragraphs and chapters of a work of philosophy. At first I attempted to follow a scheme, and the first poem bore the caption "Refacimento." Jean Wahl picked that up right off. The first step toward a supreme fiction would be to get rid of all existing fictions. A thing stands out in clear air better than it does in soot. But I very soon found that, if I stuck closely to a development, I should lose all of the qualities that I really wanted to get into the thing, and that I was likely to produce something that did not come off in any sense, not even as poetry.

The truth is that this ought to be one of only a number of books and that, if I had nothing else in the world to do except to sit on a fence and think about things, it would in fact be only one of a number of books. You have only to think about this a moment to see how extensible the idea is. I could very well do a *Theory of Supreme Fiction,* and I could try to do a *Book of Specimens,* etc., etc.... So much for the *Notes.*

*

JOSÉ RODRÍGUEZ FEO, a Cuban writer educated at Harvard, had asked permission to translate *Esthétique du Mal* for a little magazine he had founded. He seems to have satisfied Stevens' desire for the vicarious exotic, and the correspondence is warm. The circumstances of the characteristic letter to Charles Norman, later biographer of Pound, require no further explanation here.

To José Rodríguez Feo

January 26, 1945

I PUT OFF replying to your letter of January 23rd until after the arrival of the watercolours. They came on the coldest day of one of our coldest winters, and they looked unhappy in the gloomy light of that particular day. However, the picture of the pineapples, which I put in my bedroom, is now quite the master of that scene, and is as bright and cheerful a thing as there is in the house. The other one, the figure, I shall have to take to New York to have framed the next time I go down. They are both a good deal more Cuban than you are likely to realise so that, in addition to one's sense of a new and fresh artist, there is the sense of an unfamiliar place. I say unfamiliar, even though I have been to Havana twice, but the stranger in Havana probably gets very little of Cuba. On my first trip, about 25 years ago I should say, I went down alone and spent the greater part of a week there. Then, about five years later, my wife and I stopped there for about a day on the way to California by way of the Canal.[12] When I was there alone, on my first trip, I walked round the town a great deal and concluded by wanting in the wildest way to study Spanish, which I really began. Then I used to buy bundles of *El Sol* of Madrid and do my studying by looking these over. Little by little it all got away from me. For many years since then I have gone to Key West and stayed a few weeks every winter at the Casa Marina. Of course, this has not been possible these last two or three years, because that hotel has been in the hands of the Government and, since it is the only decent place there, I have not gone at all.

About Winters' *Anatomy:*[13] Although I have a copy of the book I haven't read it and, in particular, have not read a line of his essay on my own poetry.[14] This is out of pure virtue, because I think it disturbs one to read either praise or blame. There is something about poets, and probably about all writers, painters, musicians, etc., that makes them exceedingly eager for notice, which is a way of saying for praise. Moreover, they are easily and violently disturbed by the opposite; they will pay a degree of attention to hostile comment. Among other men not of their sort, as, for example, businessmen, politicians, etc., having to deal with the same sort of thing, it would not receive a moment's attention. But, since criticism is disturbing, whether it is favourable or unfavourable, I don't read it except occasionally, in the case of a man about whose judgment no question exists. I cannot say that this is true of Winters. Blackmur is immeasurably superior to him. I don't mean to say that he is any more intelligent, or any more sensitive, but he is more sensible, less eccentric. There is, however, a serious defect in Blackmur, or so it seems to me, and that is that it takes him

[11] "Notes toward a Supreme Fiction: It Must Change," VIII, *C.P.,* 395–6.

[12] This trip was later in 1923; Stevens may have meant to say five months instead of five years, or, possibly, his impressions may have been so different on his second visit with his wife that it seemed to be five years later.

[13] Yvor Winters: *The Anatomy of Nonsense.*

[14] *Ibid.* (88–119): "Wallace Stevens, or the Hedonist's Progress." Reprinted in Yvor Winters: *In Defense of Reason* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1960; London: Routledge, 1960).

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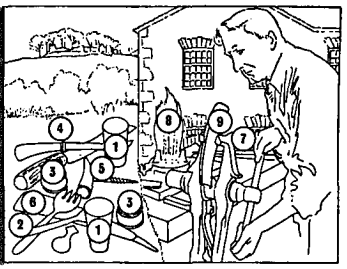
THE HORN WORKER



ROOTED on the fringe of the rugged Lakeland town of Kendal in Westmorland is the Abbey Horn Works; address: Abbey Horn Works, Kendal, Westmorland. (Shell Touring Map No. 5 from your Shell dealer.)

There, for many generations, articles have been fashioned from cattle horn. Powder horns were sent to America to be used by both armies fighting the War of Independence, and Florence Nightingale took Abbey Horn beakers with her to the Crimea. Nowadays the Works makes horn jewellery, medical spatulas, drinking cups **1**, salad servers **2**, napkin rings **3**, horn handles for cutlery **4** and corkscrews **5**, as well as over 30,000 shoehorns **6** each year. Horn has unique qualities. It is unaffected by acids, does not discolour, works easily when heated and in its prepared state has a smoothness of an almost therapeutic quality.

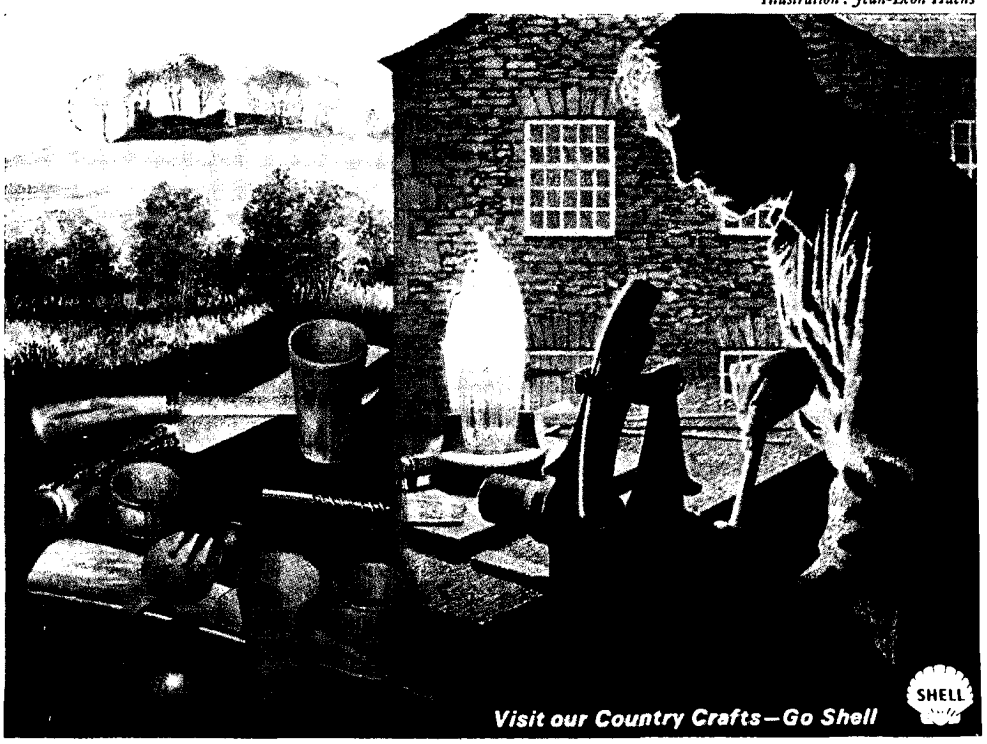
The horn arrives in large bales for sorting and grading. Horns of immense length are roughly shaped with high-speed band-saws and are then held by tongs **7** in gentle heat **8** for straightening. Many stages of shaping (shown in **9** being done in a special, adapted vice), grinding and polishing are necessary before the smooth-finished multi-coloured items are finally produced. In the horn trade colours have their own distinctive names, as, for instance, "Jaspa" meaning green.

Visitors are received between 9 a.m.–12 noon and 2 p.m.–5.30 p.m.

Why not send for a list of Country Workshops compiled by the Rural Industries Bureau, 35 Camp Road, Wimbledon Common, London, S.W.19?

New—*The Shell Country Alphabet* by Geoffrey Grigson; an encyclopaedia of countryside knowledge. Michael Joseph. 30/-.

Illustration: Jean-Leon Huens



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twenty-five pages to say what would be much better if said in one. The result is that, after you have finished twenty-five pages of Blackmur, you haven't the faintest idea what he has been talking about. Either he has too many ideas or too few; it is hard to say which. How many ideas are there in currency that can be said to be purely Blackmurean ideas? Most critics very soon become identified with a group of principles or, say, a group of ideas; I cannot say that Blackmur is identified with anything. And the truth is that I don't know of any good solid book on modern poetry. Morton Dauwen Zabel is a man of extraordinary intelligence, but it is hard to say to what he is primarily devoted. I think he is equally interested in both poetry and religion, and that creates a difficulty, because it inclines him to adopt some comparison with religion as the final test of poetry. However, I like Mr. Zabel more than these remarks might suggest.

The major men, about whom you ask, are neither exponents of humanism nor Nietzschean shadows. I confess that I don't want to limit myself as to my objective, so that in *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction* and elsewhere I have at least trifled with the idea of some arbitrary object of belief: some artificial subject for poetry, a source of poetry. The major men are part of the entourage of that artificial object. All the interest that you feel in occasional frivolities I seem to experience in sounds, and many lines exist because I enjoy their clickety-clack in contrast with the more decorous pom-pom-pom that people expect.

Your mention of Alfonso Reyes is just the sort of allusion that makes me wish with all the excitement of a real wish that I knew Spanish better than I do. One grows tired of the familiar figures and to be able to find a fresh mind in a Mexican critic,[15] or in the many writers in South America, and elsewhere in the Spanish-speaking countries, for which one would feel an instinctive respect would be a real excitement. It is, however, too late for me to attempt to become really familiar with another language.

I am sending you a copy of *Ideas of Order*. This I had not been intending to send until I could also send you a copy of *The Man with the Blue Guitar*. As yet I have not been able to procure a copy of *The Man with the Blue Guitar,* which will follow.

June 20, 1945

... THE POEM, or poems, that I shall send to you will have to be written during the summer, because I have been busy with something else and, besides, I almost always dislike anything that I do that doesn't fly in the window. Perhaps this has some bearing on what you call "the monotony of elegance." To live in Cuba, to think a little in the morning and afterward to work in the garden for an hour or two, then to have lunch and to read all afternoon and then, with your wife or someone else's wife, fill the house with fresh roses, to play a little Berlioz (this is the current combination at home: Berlioz and roses) might very well create all manner of doubts after a week or two. But when you are a little older, and have your business or your job to look after, and when there is quite enough to worry about all the time, and when you don't have time to think and the weeds grow in the garden a good deal more savagely than you could ever have supposed, and you no longer read because it doesn't seem worth while, but you do at the end of the day play a record or two, that is something quite different. Reality is the great *fond,* and it is because it is that the purely literary amounts to so little. Moreover, in the world of actuality, in spite of all I have just said, one is always living a little out of it. There is a precious sentence in Henry James, for whom everyday life was not much more than the mere business of living, but, all the same, he separated himself from it. The sentence is

> To live *in* the world of creation—to get into it and stay in it—to frequent it and haunt it—to *think* intensely and fruitfully—to woo combinations and inspirations into being by a depth and continuity of attention and meditation—this is the only thing.[16]

To CHARLES NORMAN

November 9, 1945

I PREFER not to take part in your symposium on [Ezra] Pound and although I am going to say a word or two about the thing, I don't want to be quoted or referred to in any way.

It seems to me that since Pound's liberty, not to say even his life, may be at stake, he ought to be consulted about this sort of thing. After all, he might shrink from the idea of your doing what you propose to do. Then again, he may be guilty and he may admit it. He is an eccentric person. I don't suppose there is the

[15] Reyes, ten years younger than Stevens, was not only a critic but also a poet, lawyer, and diplomat.

[16] In an undated letter following this one (undated because the first page is missing), Stevens says: "Finally, about [F. O.] Matthiessen: the quotation from Henry James about dwelling in the world of creation will be found on page 10 of Matthiessen's Major Phase."

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slightest doubt that he did what he is said to have done. While he may have many excuses, I must say that I don't consider the fact that he is a man of genius as an excuse. Surely, such men are subject to the common disciplines.

There are a number of things that could well be said in his defence. But each one of these things is so very debatable, that one would not care to say them, without having thought them out most carefully. One such possibility is that the acts of propagandists should not entail the same consequences as the acts of a spy or informer because no one attaches really serious importance to propaganda. I still don't smoke Camels, don't eat Wheaties and don't use Sweetheart soap. I don't believe that the law of treason should apply to chatter on the radio when it is recognisably chatter.

At the same time, that remark illustrates what I said a moment ago, that the things that might be said in Pound's defence are things that ought to be carefully thought out. His motives might be significant. Yet, it is entirely possible that Pound deliberately and maliciously undertook to injure this country. Don't you think it worthwhile waiting until you know why he did what he did before rallying to his defence?

I repeat that the question of his distinction seems to me to be completely irrelevant. If his poetry is in point, then so are Tokyo Rose's singing and wise-cracking. If when he comes over, he wants help and shows that he is entitled to it, then I, for one, should be very glad to help him and I mean that in a practical way and do anything possible for him.

I write this way because I think it highly likely that Pound has very good personal friends who will rally around him. They might well resent just this sort of thing that you propose to do, but I know nothing about it. I merely want to keep out of it.

This letter is not to be quoted or used in any way.

*

BARBARA CHURCH was the widow of Henry Church. She divided her life between Europe and the U.S., and Stevens wrote her many letters. For Thomas McGreevey, Stevens usually adopted his anti-British tone (saying, for example, that he would not visit Paris for fear of being "ossified by the stare" of an Englishman). This was already a long correspondence before Stevens met McGreevey. Samuel French Morse, a young poet and scholar, published a volume of poetry with a preface by Stevens. He later edited *Opus Posthumous* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957). Sister M. Bernetta Quinn wrote, in her *Metamorphic Tradition in Modern Poetry* (1955) a study of Stevens which he warmly approved of; she joined the favoured correspondents. Robert Pack's *Wallace Stevens* was published in 1958, but he had sent Stevens a paper which, after altering the passage on which the letter comments, he published in *The Western Review,* Autumn, 1955.

To Barbara Church

August 19, 1948

... DURING THE last two weeks of August and the first week of September the bottom drops out of everything here. Even the office, which ordinarily carries one through these dull periods, seems quieter and emptier than usual —people have no doubt gone to Mont St. Michel to count their beads in that climate of prayer and aspiration and good cooking or are flying in large circles over the South of France looking for someplace to come down. Does the South of France mean Aix-en-Provence? Except for the fact that one must remain ever on one's guard now, day and night, ready to grapple with the enticements of Communism, how easy it would be, at Aix, without much more effort than that of turning a few corners, to find a peace, a security, a sense of good fortune and of things that change only slowly, so much more certain than a whole era of Communism could ever give. And if that is so, how contentedly one could loaf there for a while merely studying why it is so. Some books came recently wrapped in a Paris newspaper which contained photos of some fountains at Aix, not great things, but enough to make a little sound as one walked by. This makes me think of a wild dove that was sitting high up on a wire near home a few mornings ago cooing about nothing much. I stopped to look at her. She turned around so that she could see me better but went right on with her talk.

It interests me immensely to have you speak of so many places that have been merely names for me. Yet really they have always been a good deal more than names. I practically lived in France when old Mr. Vidal was alive because if I had asked him to procure from an obscure fromagerie in the country some of the cheese with raisins in it of which I read one time, he would have done it and that is almost what living in France or anywhere else amounts to. In what sense do I live in America if I walk to and fro from the office day after day? I wrote the other day to a friend in Oregon and asked him to try to find Kieffer pears for me this

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autumn and in that sense I live in America and not merely in a street that branches off from a street that leads to the office. There are other enlargements. Often instead of walking downtown I walk in the little park through which you drove when you were here. Until quite lately a group of nuns came there each morning to paint water colours especially of the water lilies. Whenever I saw them I thought of the chasteness of the thing like the chasteness of the girl in Oscar Wilde who spent her time looking at photographs of the Alps.

To Thomas McGreevey

September 9, 1949

. . . . A good many of us are at the moment very much bored with Ireland's neighbour. Of course I have no way of knowing why we do as we do. There is so much that the Government (our government) does that hurts me, personally, that it is only too easy for me to feel that it is a clique of politicians seeking to perpetuate itself (as in fact it is). But most of the insults that we get from the British are the sort of thing that we have been getting regardless of when or why and having nothing to do with economics and politics as they exist between the British and the Americans. These dirty cracks must be regarded as expressions of a fixed attitude. How natural that sort of thing seems to be to them in their "ancient civilisations." In what sense is it any more ancient than ours? There are older ghosts and perhaps there is Roman money in the ground. The truth is that the British flatter themselves at the expense of the world, always have and always will. . . .

Yet why should I care? Over here summer is coming to an end and one is never able to tell which touches us most deeply: the end of an old season or the beginning of a new one. With us autumn means summer all over again without the heat, which this year has been hard to bear, with all sorts of lavish enrichments to take the place of the equally lavish deprivations.

I made a trial trip to New York a week ago without getting much out of it, but I wanted to see an exhibition of modern Italian pictures at the Museum of Modern Art before it was taken down. It was a review, the sort of thing that is based on a few pictures illustrating this and a few pictures illustrating that, mixed up with a few pictures as specimens of A and a few more pictures as specimens of B. It was not terribly exciting but there were some bits in it that I liked: women combing their hair, hens feeding, etc. The theoretical pictures seemed rather tiresome.

In painting, as in poetry, theory moves very rapidly and things that are revelations today are obsolete tomorrow, like the things on one's plate at dinner. Then, too, I rather resent professional modernism the way one resents an excessively fashionable woman. At the Museum of Modern Art they cultivate the idea that everything is the nuts: the stairs, the plants on the landings, the curtains in the windows, where there are any windows, the arrangement of the walls. After half an hour of it you say the hell with it. Is all this really hard thinking, really high feeling or is it a lot of nobodies running after a few somebodies? I enjoyed quite as much the window in a fruit shop that I know of which was filled with the most extraordinary things: beauteous plums, peaches like Swedish blondes, pears that made you think of Rubens and the first grapes pungent through the glass. But on the whole New York was a lemon. Instead of staying for dinner, I took an early train and got as much out of the ride home as out of anything. It made a long pleasant evening and, as I was tired and satisfied to sit and look out, it was as agreeable as anything that had happened to me all summer.

My book is not bothering me. The manuscript is not to be submitted until the end of the year. The book itself will not be published probably for five or six months thereafter. But I am just rather jealously sticking to the job. I have been doing a group of short things and after that intend to confine myself to a single piece, which ought to go rather well. In the case of short things, each of them is a new subject; in the case of a long thing, one goes ahead under the impetus of a single subject. I don't know how the book will be regarded. It is not easy to experience much in the rather routine life that I lead. While one is never sure that it makes much difference, one is equally never sure that it doesn't. . . .

To Barbara Church

September 14, 1949

My stenographer is on her vacation and I must write to you, like a scribe. Your postcard from Worms showed that you had been in the Pfalz, which is a holy land, in which I should like to spend a whole summer—or rather, might have liked to do so fifty years ago, when I could walk all day without tiring. Nowadays, a few hours knocking around New York are enough for me. A week or two ago I went down for the day to see the Italian pictures at the Modern Art, before they were taken down. After the French painters, the Italians seem like hangers-on or followers, although they are not; and this exhibition, pro-

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digious in so many ways, left little sense of prodigy. It could not possibly surprise. Here and there it delighted. New York was still covered with the dust and withering of summer, so that I was glad to go home, feeling that I had missed nothing by sticking to my job all summer. We have already had the heat on several times, on days of Canadian weather. But it is not on today, which is more like Cuba.

I have now reached a point in my plans for *Auroras of Autumn* when I must begin what I intend to be the only remaining long poem. During August I did a group of short things, ten in all. This kept my nose to the grindstone. It is much easier to make progress on a single long poem, in which one goes ahead pretty much as one talks, as one thing leads to another. Recently, I read an analysis of some poems of St. John Perse. If the analysis was right, that is to say: if that is what the poems of Perse are about, they are very queer, indeed. Their queerness does not hurt them as poems, so that, perhaps, it doesn't matter at all. I suppose I should resent and repudiate the analyst. It may be *he* that had so little meaning.

Already you must be able to smell America on the west wind. One's sense of anxiety about the future, which everything seems to exploit, does not grow less. In any case Madame Chiang Kai Tchek has gone to rejoin the Generalissimo; the children are back in school and occasionally there is something else than disaster in the newspapers. *Quand même*—As one of the men said here the other day: Truman is riding a horse, about which he knows very little. Our own business is most prosperous. But the more prosperous it is, the more difficult it will be to keep it so, since politicians in general support themselves at the expense of the prosperous. . . . My new picture has reached New York. I should have it in another week or so.

To Samuel French Morse

July 13, 1949

. . . About the manuscript at the Lockwood Memorial Library [University of Buffalo]: that ought to have gone into the wastebasket because I have no real manuscripts in the sense in which people speak of manuscripts. Most of the poems that I have written, at least in recent years, have been written in the morning on my way to the office. I make notes and try to fix things in my mind and then when I arrive at the office arrange these things and, finally, when I am at home in the evening I write the thing out. The result is hardly a manuscript. I think that I was right to say that I did not want the manuscript at Buffalo to be anything more than an autograph, which was about what was wanted, and, for that reason, I hope you won't mind if I say no to your request.

I don't remember saying much of anything to Harry Duncan in letters, etc., and I don't really think that one's offhand remarks should be taken seriously. Some people always know exactly what they think. I am afraid that I am not one of those people. The same thing keeps active in my mind and rarely becomes fixed. This is true about politics as it is about poetry. But I suppose that it is really true about everything.

If I can be of any help to you otherwise, I shall be glad to do the best I can although this does not seem to be a very promising start.

To Barbara Church

August 20, 1951

This *confiance que le poète fait, et nous invite à faire, au monde,* of which Jean Paulhan speaks, is the essential value of poetry today. If the philosophy of the sciences is as inimical to that as it has been to the idea of God, then that particular philosophy will leave nothing for us, in the end, except itself. But if so, instead of merely having destroyed antagonistic concepts, it will have substituted its own concept for others. Is not the concept of final knowledge poetic?

Jean Paulhan isolates the philosophy of the sciences. The quantum theory to which he refers is not a thing to be assimilated off-hand. But I love his *"approximations macroscopiques"* and must think how to use them together with Jean Wahl's *fausses reconnaissances.* Is not the idea of the hero an *"approximation macroscopique"*?

In any event, your friends are saints to have come to my help. Please tell Jean Paulhan how grateful I am for his doubts, which are invigorating. I hope this comes in time for you to tell him before you start on your trip. It made me happy the other day to find that [Rudolph] Carnap said flatly that poetry and philosophy are one. The philosophy of the sciences is not opposed to poetry any more than the philosophy of mathematics is opposed. Obviously, the *confiance au monde* is only one among other possible more ethereal confiances: the *confiance aux sciences,* for example. Adieu.

To Sister M. Bernetta Quinn

April 14, 1953

I think that I have to be in a particular state of mind in order to write to you and last week I was not in that state of mind. There was a letter from a schoolboy, a letter and a collection

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of poems from a young man in Chicago, a volume of poems from a young woman in Boston, a visit from a Norwegian poet who is at Yale on a scholarship from her government. Poetry so often seems a very queer thing, so rarely the pursuit of elevation, etc., in oneself and in the world and beyond. It so often seems like a soiled towel, so rarely like the right linen, as it is with you and other right people. I wrote a note to the young woman in Boston whose poetry was mostly prose, well aware that all poets identify themselves with their poetry. I tried to be discreet. But she was on the telephone the next morning, saying that it was terribly important that she should understand exactly what I meant. On the other hand, the young woman from Norway was one of the anointed. She is the real thing all the way through. Her whole life seems to be devoted to poetry. This is a view that we don't often have over here. We are wrong. When the Norwegian was here I asked her to read some of her things in her own language. While her words meant nothing at all, the definiteness of the sounds and the expression of her feeling in the sounds showed how completely she was a poet. A strange visitor with none of the affectations of being a poet—hair-do in a horse's tail and a general naturalness and youthfulness. Besides all that, we have had nothing but rain for more than a month and while Spring has come, it has in fact come more like the woman from Boston than the young Norwegian.

I enjoyed your Easter greeting. Your notes bring me into contact with something that I should not have otherwise except for them and I am grateful to you.

To Robert Pack

December 28, 1954

At the top of page 16 of your paper you say: "Mr. Stevens' work does not really lead anywhere." This is not quite the same thing as get anywhere and I realise that you say this in connection with a differentiation between a work without a plot and a work with a plot. Still, without regard to any other consideration, if it meant to me what it meant to me, it might very well mean the same thing to anybody else. That a man's work should remain indefinite is often intentional. For instance, in projecting a supreme fiction, I cannot imagine anything more fatal than to state it definitely and incautiously. For a long time, I have thought of adding other sections to the *Notes* and one in particular: *It Must Be Human*. But I think that it would be wrong not to leave well enough alone.

I don't mean to try to exercise the slightest restraint on what you say. Say what you will. But we are dealing with poetry, not with philosophy. The last thing in the world that I should want to do would be to formulate a system.

Bat

Do not turn your skin. The night
protects whatever is dark-skinned, asphalt
that covers the sun-stricken grains of sand.
See the things of the bodily world as they are.
Learn from the bat that found remains
of an ancient bat among the olive trees
and did not ask when it lived.
The lightning that flash-lit your face
took the olive trees' picture too and struck
the saplings. Learn to see
Things in their own light.

David Rokeah

English version: Michael Hamburger

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Seymour Martin Lipset

Doves, Hawks, and Polls

NEVER BEFORE in the annals of American political history has a president exhibited such an obvious and intense concern over his public image as evidenced by the polls.

This raises the question: what are the uses and abuses of polls in affecting the actions of political leaders?

There is a very great difference in the meaning (reliability) of responses with respect to domestic and foreign affairs. Domestically, the polls indicate that we are dealing with relatively stable attitudes, on issues such as the welfare state, race relations, etc. In addition, when new issues arise such as how to deal with inflation, unemployment, Medicare, people can react to them in terms of direct personal experience, or liberal-conservative predispositions. Conversely, in the area of foreign policy most Americans know very little, and are only indirectly involved. They have no way of checking on reports of what is going on in areas under contention, nor for that matter, on sentiments elsewhere in the world. Consequently, the press and political leaders can have much more influence in determining public opinion on foreign issues than on domestic issues. Whether Tshombe is a villain or a hero, whether the downfall of Nkrumah is good or bad, is defined *for* the average American rather than *by* the average American. If we track out the career profile in the polls of a single leader, say Tito of Yugoslavia or de Gaulle of France, it becomes plain that the poll variations in the U.S. follow national interest decisions made about the given leader, *i.e.*, whether his actions further or negate American concerns. In other words, polls do not make policy so much as follow policy in most areas of international affairs.

The highly publicised efforts by the President and other foreign policy advocates to interpret the various poll results dealing with the Vietnamese conflict, which find both hawks and doves claiming that the American people agree with them, point to the need to clarify the meaning of the polls. Some months ago, a faculty group at various San Francisco Bay Area colleges actually dug down in their own pockets to pay the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) of the University of Chicago to conduct a survey which might clear up some of the confusion. Unfortunately, this survey was no more conclusive than others which have been conducted over the years by other pollsters such as George Gallup, Louis Harris, National Analysts, and the Opinion Research Corporation. The results of most surveys can still be interpreted by both extremes in the foreign policy debate to fit their own preconceptions.

The truth is that the American people as a whole, and many, if not most, individuals cannot be placed in the category of dove or hawk. Two sets of attitudes stand out among the various responses. The great majority of the American people desire peace in Viet Nam, do not want war with China, are prepared to accept some sort of compromise truce with the enemy, and, in fact, anticipate a negotiated peace rather than a victory which will see the defeat of the Viet Cong. On the other hand, a substantial majority is strongly hostile to Communism and all the Communist countries, including Soviet Russia, Cuba and China. Almost nobody interviewed by NORC (5 per cent or less) believes that our foreign policy towards any one of these countries is "too tough"; a large majority agree with statements that the U.S. is "too soft" in dealing with China and Cuba;

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almost half think we are "too soft" in our relations with the Russians. Most of those who do not think the policy is "too soft" say it is right.

BASICALLY, the opinion data indicate that national policy-makers, particularly the President, have an almost free hand to pursue any policy they think correct and get public support for it. They can escalate under the justification that this is the only way to prevent a Communist take-over in South-east Asia; they can negotiate with the Viet Cong for a coalition government if this policy is presented as one which will gain peace while avoiding a total Communist take-over. These conclusions do not mean that most people are fickle, but rather that they agree on certain larger objectives, peace without the expansion (or contraction) of Communism, and find it necessary to trust the judgment of national leaders as to what is possible given these purposes.

Most Americans are, in fact, doves *and* hawks; the more thorough and detailed the querying of opinions, the more clearly this appears. Early in March of this year, the Gallup Poll asked, "Would you favour or oppose bombing big cities in North Viet Nam?" Sixty per cent voiced opposition, while only 28 per cent favoured it. (The NORC study used a similar question and reported 55 per cent against bombing cities in North Viet Nam and 39 per cent in support.) These results would seem to clearly indicate a dove majority against bombing North Viet Nam. Yet in the same survey, Gallup also inquired, "Would you favour or oppose *bombing industrial plants and factories* in North Viet Nam?" The response distribution was almost precisely opposite to the "bomb North Vietnamese cities" question. Sixty-one per cent said they were for the bombing of factories and 26 per cent were against. In other words, three-fifths of the American public (not the same people) were for the bombing of North Vietnamese factories, but against bombing their cities, in March and April. This means that the policy of "strategic" bombing and avoiding "civilian" targets is generally approved. Thus, when Louis Harris asked about our resumption of bombing in January: "Do you think President Johnson was right or wrong to resume bombing in North Viet Nam after the recent pause?" 73 per cent said he was right; only 10 per cent were opposed. And two months later a National Analysts survey conducted for NBC which inquired, "Should the U.S. continue bombing North Viet Nam?" reported almost identical results, 78 per cent for continuing; 14 per cent for stopping the attacks.

The American public shows a similar general propensity to discriminate among the methods which should be used in fighting the war. Almost the same size majority (68 per cent) told National Analysts interviewers that they *opposed* the U.S. using "any nuclear weapons in Viet Nam," as *approved* U.S. use of "gas that does not kill people."

Are these illogical or inconsistent responses? No, as in the case of the answers to the bombing questions, they reflect a national mood to do as little as possible to stop Communist expansion. The dominant attitude seems to be not to let Viet Nam "go Communist," coupled with a desire to end the war as soon as possible, on the most minimal conditions which include a willingness to negotiate directly with the Viet Cong.

The various surveys point up this mixed pattern of responses. Peace sentiments are strong. Almost everyone (88 per cent) polled by NORC would favour "American negotiations with the Viet Cong if they were willing to negotiate," and a majority (52 per cent for, 36 per cent against) would be willing to approve "forming a new government in which the Viet Cong took some part" in order to "end the fighting."

But the *same sample* of respondents who gave these dove answers turned into veritable militant hawks when asked, "If President Johnson were to announce tomorrow that we were going to withdraw from Viet Nam and let the Communists take over, would you approve or disapprove?" Four-fifths of the NORC sample, 81 per cent, disapproved, as compared with but 15 per cent favouring getting out. A goodly majority (56 per cent for, 39 per cent against) would *not* agree to "gradually withdrawing our troops and letting the South Vietnamese work out their own problems" even though the possibility of a Communist victory was not mentioned in the question.

Expressive of the willingness of Americans to fight the war was the response to a NORC question which first asked respondents to choose among three alternative courses of action: continuing the present situation indefinitely; fighting a major war with hundreds of thousands of casualties; or supporting a withdrawal of

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American troops which leads to an eventual Communist take-over. Almost half (49 per cent) would continue the present situation; 23 per cent favour escalation to a major war; and 19 per cent would support getting out. However, when the choice was narrowed to support of escalation to a major war or withdrawal, twice as many (60 per cent) chose major war as favoured withdrawal. The same aggressive posture is reflected in the answers to an NBC-National Analysts Poll, in March, which asked respondents to choose whether we should "pursue a more offensive ground war in Viet Nam than we are presently doing, or should we establish defensive positions around the cities we now control?" Over half (55 per cent) chose to escalate as compared to 28 per cent who favoured holding our present lines.

When pollsters' questions remind respondents of the cost of the war in lives and do not mention Communism, Americans often support the more pacific alternative; when they are faced with fighting or agreeing to a Communist victory, they opt for continuing the war, and even with escalating if necessary.

YET, THOUGH most Americans ruefully are willing to keep fighting in Viet Nam if this is necessary to prevent a complete Communist take-over, or expansion to neighbouring countries, they clearly would much prefer not to be there, and are anxious and willing to turn over responsibility to someone else. Back in June 1954, when it first appeared as if the U.S. might send troops to Indo-China, only 20 per cent told Gallup interviewers that they would approve sending U.S. soldiers "to help the French fight the Communists in Indo-China." And much more recently, on various occasions, clear majorities have reported to Gallup, Harris, and NORC alike that they would like to see the United Nations take over from the United States, either to fight or settle the war. Thus in the first few months of this year, 70 per cent told NORC they would approve the UN or some neutral countries negotiating a peace "with each side holding the territory it now holds"; 74 per cent indicated to Gallup interviewers they would approve the UN working out "its own formula for peace in Viet Nam"; more people (49 per cent) said that the U.S. should submit the Viet Nam question to the UN and abide by the UN's decision, *no matter what it is,* than opposed the idea (37 per cent); and a UN army for Viet Nam and South-east Asia was approved by a three to one majority, almost identical to the results obtained by Gallup to a similar question a year earlier.

The strength of the sentiment to turn the war over to the United Nations may be seen in the fact that the only occasion recorded by the polls in which the group of respondents voicing an explicitly negative judgment of President Johnson far outweighed his supporters has been on this issue. In September 1965, the Harris Survey reported that 42 per cent agreed with the statement that the President was "more wrong than right" in not asking the UN to take over in Viet Nam, while only 25 per cent thought he was "more right than wrong," and the rest were not sure. A more recent Harris Survey released in early April of this year reports that Americans favour by nearly two to one (50 per cent to 27 per cent) "turning over the entire Viet Nam war to a special three-man United Nations committee for arbitration and a decision binding on all parties."

These attitudes not only reflect ambivalent sentiments about U.S. participation in Viet Nam, they also indicate the very strong positive feeling of the overwhelming majority of the American people towards the United Nations. All the surveys have consistently indicated widespread popular support for the UN. The vociferous rightist critics of American membership in the international body can hardly find an echo of their views among the general public. Almost all Americans seem to identify the UN with prospects for world peace, and are willing to do anything to endorse it, including criticising American foreign policy if a question is worded in such a way as to make the pro-UN response involve such criticism.

In evaluating the poll responses, it is important to keep in mind that the proportion of Americans who can be considered "soft" on Communism is insignificantly small. Those who approve forming a new government in which the Viet Cong takes part are almost as hard in their attitudes towards Castro, Communist China, and Russia as those who oppose Viet Cong participation. In other words "hard line" anti-Communists are almost as prone to favour dealing with the Viet Cong directly, as those who are generally more favourable to the expansion of relations with Communist countries. For example, 60 per cent of those favourable to a coalition with the Viet Cong think our policy towards Castro is "too soft," as

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compared with 70 per cent among those who would not admit the Viet Cong to the government. The response pattern with respect to attitudes towards Communist China and Russia is similar.

There can be little doubt of the strength of the anti-Communist sentiments of the American people, of their willingness to fight to prevent Communist expansion, yet also of their intense desire to experiment with any remotely possible formula that might bring peace in Viet Nam.

These mixed "hawk-dove" sentiments in large measure underlie the general state of opinion concerning President Johnson's handling of the Vietnamese situation. Polls taken before the Spring 1966 Buddhist crisis, by Gallup and Harris over the previous year, had indicated approval for the President in the ratio of two to one. The last such pre-crisis survey, Gallup's of late March, indicated that 56 per cent approved, while 26 per cent disapproved. (The NORC Survey taken a little earlier found a comparable division, 61 per cent approving and 29 per cent disapproving, almost identical to the results reported by the NBC-National Analysts Poll, also taken in March.)

IT IS DIFFICULT to tell from the available reports of the various surveys whether the critics of President Johnson are disproportionately hawks or doves. It is clear that a large majority both of the extreme hawks, those who favour "carrying the war more into North Viet Nam," and of the more pacific doves, those who would "pull our troops out now," tell pollsters they oppose the President's Vietnamese policies. The President, on a number of occasions, has stated that most of those who disapprove of his Vietnamese policies are hawks, rather than doves. And he has interpreted increases in the proportions voicing criticism, such as occurred in May and June of 1966, as reflecting a growth in sentiment to escalate. This may be so, but the President has not presented figures comparing the attitudes of his supporters and opponents on a variety of specific policy issues. This would be the only way to reach a conclusion on this point.

The NORC survey is the only one to do so in detail. Those who "disapprove the way the Johnson administration is handling the situation in Viet Nam" are slightly more likely than supporters to give dove rather than hawk responses on policy questions. However, on issues to which most people give hawk responses, those critical of the President's war policies do likewise. Thus 73 per cent of his opponents would *disapprove* if the President announced a withdrawal which permitted the Communists to take over. A similar proportion would disapprove an end to the war which might mean the loss of the independence of "countries like Laos and Thailand." More opponents (26 per cent) would choose escalation to a "major war" than would back "withdrawal" (21 per cent).

Most recently, a Gallup survey taken in early June reports that among those who disapproved of Johnson's handling of the situation in Viet Nam, 10 per cent gave answers which could be categorised under the heading "we should be more aggressive," while 13 per cent said that "we should get out." My own interpretation of the data presented by various pollsters is that the proportion of hawks and doves among the President's critics, reported recently by Gallup, has tended to be a relatively stable pattern. That is, the critics have usually contained slightly more doves than hawks. It should be stressed, however, that there is always a third group present among the President's critics whose responses cannot be classified in either category, and who are presumably for maintaining current policies.

Concern for the Future

CLEARLY, the American people are worried about the Viet Nam war. Indeed, they are, according to recent reports, at least twice as concerned over the war as they are over the next leading "issues"—the civil rights —Negro race issue. When Gallup asked a national sample in December what headline they would most like to see in "tomorrow's paper," almost 9 out of 10 respondents spontaneously mentioned peace. Almost half (46 per cent) specifically said "peace in Viet Nam," while another 41 per cent stated peace in general. These findings were reiterated in the NORC survey which found that more voters (62 per cent) said they "worried a great deal" about the war in Viet Nam than about any other issue. Only 7 per cent said the issue of the war did not worry them at all.

The anxiety and serious thought which Americans devote to the Vietnamese War does

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not mean that they see any quick or simple way to gain the peace they so ardently desire. They know that we have not been doing well. A CBS-Opinion Research Corporation survey reported in December that when asked which side controlled "most of the land area of South Viet Nam," more people said the enemy than our side. *Only 24 per cent* thought we were "making progress towards victory." The bulk of those interviewed also had a reasonably accurate estimate of the numbers of American troops in Viet Nam and the casualties suffered by them. Last December, when asked by Gallup how long they think the war will last, less than 20 per cent thought it would end in a year or less; 26 per cent guessed at two or three more years; while 36 per cent said at least four more years. And when asked by Gallup in January of this year: "Do you think the war will end in a clear-cut victory in Viet Nam, or will it end in some sort of compromise settlement?" only 7 per cent foresaw a clear-cut victory; 69 per cent predicted a compromise ending. Such sentiments have continued throughout the first half of this year. This anticipation of a compromise settlement is reflected in the large majorities favouring a negotiated settlement which have been reported by both Gallup and Harris.

The fact that the government of South Viet Nam became involved in serious troubles with its own people in the late Spring should not have been too surprising to many Americans. The CBS-National Analysts survey reported in December 1965 that only 22 per cent of Americans thought most South Vietnamese are loyal to their present leaders, *i.e.*, the Ky régime. In spite of this lack of belief in popular support for the South Vietnamese government, when this same sample was asked: "Do you think we should have pulled out before American fighting units became involved, or do you think that staying there was the right thing to do?" only 20 per cent said we should have pulled out, 65 per cent thought staying in Viet Nam was right. The sentiment underlying the ability of people to hold both beliefs is that the most common reason given for being in Viet Nam by those supporting the war is a general one not specific to Viet Nam: to stop Communist expansion.

The data presented by the various pollsters make it possible for one to argue that the American people are tough, soft, informed, confused, decisive, and indecisive, depending on the case one wants to make. To interpret them in any of these ways, however, would be wrong. These attitudes reflect certain consistent underlying beliefs about peace and Communism which most of the American public, like those who hold office, find difficult to reconcile. Very few are willing to approve actions which would increase the chances for a larger war, reduce the possibilities for early peace, or encourage Communist expansion into non-Communist areas, inside or outside of Viet Nam. And the survey data suggest that most Americans share with their leaders the sense that they are in a morass from which they do not yet see a way out.

THE FINDINGS of the surveys clearly indicate that the President, while having a relatively free hand in the actual decision-making to escalate or to de-escalate the war, is more restricted when considering the generic issues of action or inaction. He must give the appearance of a man *engagé*, of being certain of what he is doing, *i.e.*, that the anticipated consequences do in fact come about.

There are two parameters as to the way the President presents his programme; one, it must always be perceived as a part of a plan to secure the peace, particularly if the action involved is actually escalation; second, pacific actions must be presented as ways to contain Communism, or even to weaken it. The President, who is a master at reading and interpreting opinion polls, seems to understand this. He knows that in order to get the support of the American people for a war they wish they never were in, he must continually put his best "peace foot" forward. He must continually talk and offer peace, if he is to have public endorsement for war.

And conversely, any effort to make peace, to reach agreement with any Communist state, must be presented as a way to "contain" Communism, to weaken it by facilitating splits among the various Communist states, or to help change it internally so that it will be less totalitarian, more humane, and less expansionist.

There are, of course, important limits, real limits, on the ability of the President to determine public response. During 1966, his personal popuarity and endorsement for the Vietnamese policy dropped sharply—to a point where the percentage indicating support fell to less than 50 per cent. A Gallup survey in

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May indicated only 41 per cent of the general public approved "the way Johnson is handling the situation in Viet Nam," as against 37 per cent who disapproved. This general decline in support was a result of the internal turmoil among the South Vietnamese, and a feeling that the President had become indecisive in his handling of the war. Clearly, there was no way that the President could have prevented the American people from learning of the opposition in the streets to General Ky's government. These events, according to Gallup, led to a sizable increase in the proportion who felt that continued fighting is useless, who viewed the war as lost. Gallup reported as of early June, before the facilities at Haiphong and Hanoi were bombed, that for the first time since the U.S. became heavily engaged in Viet Nam, less than half the population, 48 per cent, supported continuing the war, as compared with 35 per cent who were in favour of taking our troops out.

Yet according to the Harris Survey, another effect of the despair over the South Vietnamese turmoil was to increase sharply the numbers of Americans who favoured sharp escalation in tactics as a means of ending the war. Thus, *before* the decision was made to bomb installations at Hanoi and Haiphong in June, Harris reported that those in favour of bombing the two cities had increased from 20 per cent as of September 1965, to 34 per cent in May 1966, while opposition to such bombings had dropped from 47 to 34 per cent. Support for blockading North Vietnamese ports, a step not yet taken, jumped from 38 per cent in September to 53 per cent in May. Those willing to "carry the ground war into North Viet Nam at the risk of bringing Red China into the fighting" went up from 28 per cent in December 1965, to 38 per cent in May.

Once the religious strife was terminated, the President could regain his hold on public opinion by the twin tactics of escalating the bombing raids and emphasising the military defeats suffered by the Viet Cong, and the presumed demoralisation of the Ho government in Hanoi. Gallup reports as of July 1966 show that between early June and mid-July general support for the President jumped from 46 per cent to 56 per cent and specific endorsement of his role in the Viet Nam conflict rose from 41 per cent to 49 per cent. These changes underscore the need for Presidential action as a basis for continuing support. The sense of action seems to have also enhanced the support for a policy of escalation. Harris indicates that the percentage supporting a policy of "intensifying" war effort increased from 47 in May, to 60 in August. More than 80 per cent of those polled in mid-summer favoured the "bombing of military targets at Hanoi and Haiphong in the hope that this will speed the day when we can bring our troops home."

These results do not mean, however, that any course of decisive action is without great political risks. The deeply-felt general anxiety over the continuation and escalation of the war may result in considerable loss of support to the Democrats in the 1966 Congressional elections. A minority, but one large enough to affect the outcome in many districts, is increasingly unhappy. The fact that some of the critics are hawks and others doves does not change the fact that they may vote for the opposition, or not vote at all as a means of protest. A Harris Survey early in the year reports that "those who disagree with the Administration conduct in Viet Nam today say they are likely to vote 52–48 per cent Republican next fall." As of mid-August, the Gallup Poll reported that only 50 per cent of the electorate outside of the South said they will vote Democratic in the November Congressional elections, a drop-off of five per cent from 1964. Underlying this loss in Democratic support may be the fact that for the first time in many years, a larger group (30 per cent) said that the Republicans are more likely than the Democrats (22 per cent) to keep the U.S. out of World War III. Contrast this with the findings in October 1964, when 45 per cent saw the Democrats as the more pacific party as contrasted with 22 per cent for the Republicans.

A COMPROMISE peace settlement would probably be very popular immediately after being arranged. If this settlement, however, results in a Communist take-over in South Viet Nam, and an enlargement of Communist guerrilla activities in Laos and Thailand soon afterwards, one can expect the Republican opposition to capitalise on the strong anti-Communist expansionist sentiments of the majority of Americans. GOP leaders will argue the American sacrifices in the Vietnamese War were all for naught, that we must still fight or see Communism grow. And such arguments may find considerable support, as similar ones seemed to have after the fall of China.

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The survey data indicate sentiments which may be used to aid the Republicans and even stimulate right-wing activity, but also suggest the possibility that the social base for a new wave of McCarthyism may be emerging.

McCarthyism, it should be noted, was almost entirely a phenomenon of a war against Communism. The popular strength of Senator McCarthy rose and fell with the Korean War. His campaign against domestic subversion began almost simultaneously with the North Korean attack, and he was censured by the Senate as the fighting stopped. Current surveys indicate renewed widespread intolerance of anti-war activities and suspicion that Communists are behind them. Thus, when asked in the NBC-National Analysts poll in March, "Do you agree with the right of an American citizen to demonstrate against the war in Viet Nam?" only 34·5 per cent agreed, 62 per cent opposed it. In December the CBS-Opinion Research Corporation survey inquired as to the motives of "individuals and groups in this country who are actively against our being in Viet Nam." Only a quarter (24 per cent) of those queried perceived "honest disagreement with U.S. policy," more (31 per cent) thought opponents of the war were "carrying out Communist plans," while 32 per cent said they were "mostly draft dodgers." An earlier Gallup Poll (November 1965) inquired "To what extent, if any, have the Communists been involved in the demonstrations over Viet Nam—a lot, some, to a minor extent or not at all?" It is somewhat disturbing to note that 58 per cent of those interviewed said "a lot," 20 per cent said "some," 8 per cent chose the "minor extent" response, while only 4 per cent thought there was no Communist involvement. These findings may herald popular support for a new wave of repressive outbursts such as has characterised each of our wars, and thus inhibit serious discussion of Viet Nam policy.

To sum up the implications of the polls, it seems clear that the President holds the trump cards in dealing with the public on foreign policy matters. The public knows they do not know, and feel they must trust the President, for there is no one else on whom they can rely in the international field. There is no equivalent to Dwight Eisenhower around today, *i.e.*, an opposition leader with sufficient personal status and international experience to become a counter-centre of foreign-policy confidence.

If this is so, why does Lyndon Johnson pay so much attention to survey results? Not, I would suspect, to convince himself that he is doing right, or that he is following the wishes of the people. *Johnson makes opinion, he does not follow it.* His interest in the opinion polls, therefore, reflects his desire to be sure that his approach is reaching the American public in the way he wants them affected. The polls tell him how good a politician he is. They are also a weapon against his critics. Lyndon Johnson is not an academic scientist, he is a political leader. He is under no obligation to make public politically unpalatable information. And, as we have seen, there is enough in the surveys for the President to find justification for whatever policy he wants to pursue in Viet Nam, and to tell his political critics that the people are behind him, as indeed they are.

THE POLL DATA can also enable the President, and other politicians as well, to ignore opposition demonstrations, which are organised by relatively small minorities. Thus, opinion surveys of university student populations, who have provided the main source of organised disagreement, indicate that the overwhelming majority of American students are behind the war. There have been four national surveys of campus opinion, two in 1965 by Louis Harris and *Playboy*, and two in 1966 by Samuel Lubell and Gallup. All of these indicate that a large majority of American students support the war in Viet Nam. Harris indicated close to three-quarters were in favour in February 1965; *Playboy* found that in November, 59 per cent of the students were for pushing the war into North Viet Nam, while only 8 per cent were for pulling out; in April 1966, Samuel Lubell reported that two-thirds of campus opinion backed the President's policies in Viet Nam; while in June of this year, Gallup indicated that 47 per cent of college youth endorsed the way "Johnson is handling the situation in Viet Nam," while of the remaining group, 23 per cent disapproved because they thought the U.S. should be more aggressive, and another 16 per cent of the students criticised the President for being "indecisive" or "inconsistent." Faculty opinion, according to a *Playboy* poll, is also behind the war, although by a smaller majority than the students. Most surprising, in view of all the publicity given to the emergence of a student and youth-based new Left, is the fact that the opinion polls suggest that students are much more favourable to the war than is

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the general public, and that the youngest generation of voters (21–29) have consistently given *greater* support to President Johnson's Vietnamese policies than do older ones.

The recent Gallup Poll of students also indicates that the demonstrations against using grades as a basis for student draft deferments have little backing on campus. Almost four out of five students (78 per cent among males and 79 per cent among coeds) said that grades should determine who is taken by selective service.

As a final datum, a comparative note with sentiment during the Korean War suggests that the readiness of Americans to fight a land war in Asia has increased markedly in fifteen years. As of January 1951, Gallup reported that 66 per cent agreed with the statement that we should "pull our troops out of Korea as fast as possible" as contrasted with only 25 per cent who said: "keep our troops there...." Although it is generally now forgotten, the opposition to the Korean War, as measured by the opinion polls, was considerably greater than any which has yet been recorded to the Vietnamese War. Any effort to evaluate the significance of the efforts to stop the present war should also consider the fact that, with the single exception of World War II, there has been major opposition to every war in which the United States has engaged.

The findings presented in this effort to sum up the results of opinion surveys on the Viet Nam war may depress many who hope to modify American foreign policy through mobilising segments of the public in support of various peace movements. It is obvious that such efforts face considerable obstacles, particularly during an on-going war. But ignorance of difficulties is not a virtue, even if knowledge may not suggest a path to influence or victory.

Poem

The folly of believing he can lose
Grounded poverty and heavy despair
In another's verve for air: this folly
Each man once masters, some hunch all his own,
Whether it burn him out in passion's throb
And leaves his flabby membrane to the wind's
Disdain, or whether it slowly through years
Dissuades him from life, overmasters him
And makes of his bones some hunch not his own.
The folly of believing he can share
His sense of the ground, his own sense of air
With another's squint: this is a balloon
All men are air to. This is not to say
When Summer floods the fields I won't hold you
And move inside your struggle, but Summer
Will surge over us, idly sharing us.

Nicholas Snowden Willey

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Ralph Robin

Lamina 96

WE BEGIN with some thoughts of Professor Gording:

Here I am, an adulterer, and I can't keep my mind on my adultery. It's like some kind of joke; I'm ashamed. I hope my face is ardent—I had better bare my teeth a little. My body is functioning normally. My mind, my mind keeps racing away. The unknown word might be an adjective. If I consider it in English word order: Send eighteen *trana* jars. What kind of jars would *trana* jars be?

"What did you say, my dearest?" she said.

Oh, my God, was I talking out loud? Impossible. She means I should say something. "I love you more than I can say."

"I love you," she said. "I love you more than Wesley, and I love him dearly." Wesley was her husband.

Professor Gording thought: Wesley might walk in sometime and shoot me. He's stupid enough to pull a trick like that. What a ridiculous pair they are, in my world.

But now everything was going forward nicely, and Malcolm Gording was pleased to observe that he was concentrating on his adultery. Now this is something, he thought, something indeed. I wish I could stay in this state forever.

But of course he couldn't.

They might be new jars. *Trana* birds, in Lamina 36? New birds, young birds, nestlings. *Trana* cheese, in Lamina 82? New cheese. *Trana* word, in Lamina 117, evidently a leaf of a rhetoric manual—what but a new word, our own "neologism"? Deborah certainly made him feel good, but now he would have to talk to her for a while. Why had he never made love with an intelligent woman since puberty? Bad luck, he supposed, or as that ancient culture put it, "unattended event." How strange of those people to call bad luck "unattended event." What did they mean by it?

"Oh, Malcolm, you never tell me about your work, and you're so famous."

"I gave you a dozen reprints."

"But they're so hard."

"Well, I guess they are. But I gave you the *Saturday Review* with a popular article of mine."

"I don't like that magazine, I told you. It's highbrow and unpatriotic."

Shall I have another before I leave? Malcolm thought. No, I guess not. I can't forgive her stupidity after two. I need a residue of desire to make her acceptable. I'll kiss her and be on my way, though I would have benefited from a second one.

"We don't have much time together, Deborah. You wouldn't want me to be spending it on a home lecture platform. It wouldn't be . . . respectful. But one of these days I'll give you a whole survey course in oriental studies."

"You're an old dear."

"You're a young dear."

"Thanks for the 'young.'"

WHEN MALCOLM entered his own door, he threw a "Hello, Freya" toward the kitchen and went up to the bathroom. He got his whisky bottle from the linen closet and poured himself a drink in the toothbrush glass. He didn't have to hide his whisky, of

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course. It was quite openly in the linen closet. He had to keep it in the bathroom, though, as the only proper place for it, and it was too large for the medicine cabinet. When there was no linen closet in the bathroom, its place was on the floor beside the Clorox. At the time of their engagement, Freya had made the concession of a whisky bottle in the bathroom. It was the same concession her mother had made, and she saw no reason she should vary from it.

Freya was a good cook, you could say that for her. Who else still cooked vegetable soup starting with fresh vegetables and a marrow bone? It was unusually good tonight: if only she would keep quiet and let him enjoy it. But the conversation began with her remark:

"June's daughter has flunked out."

"That's terrible," Malcolm said. "She probably was treated unfairly."

"She certainly was. Her English professor gave her an 'F' just because she took an essay out of the very book he told her to."

"They should do something about those professors," Malcolm said. He went on eating soup; the carrots were perfect.

"They certainly should," Freya said, not remembering that Malcolm was a professor —or, at least, he was during the occasional years between fellowships. He was now at the Tower on a fellowship, and though they had been in the city only three months Freya already had a good supply of local Junes, Berthas, and Prudences with their infinite troubles. During the same period, Malcolm had acquired one Deborah, almost sufficient for his purposes.

"Belle's husband is a compulsive gambler," Freya said.

"I didn't know that," Malcolm said. "It's a serious problem."

"He lost. . . ."

But Professor Gording did not hear what Belle's husband had lost. He was confident now that *trana* meant "new." The word occurred often, and he was pleased at this moment that the culture had liked it so much. "*Trana* eggs." Why shouldn't they like their eggs to be *trana* fifty-two hundred years ago by radiocarbon dating?

Lamina 96, his special problem and delight, used the word three times. That is, the author had used it, the human being had used it. *Trana* milk—new milk. *Trana dlorg* —whatever a *dlorg* might be. The sound of the word by itself was unpleasant, but Malcolm knew better than to trust that kind of impression. *Trana kez. Kez* remained as baffling as *dlorg*.

"Poor Belle," Malcolm said.

"No, no, not Belle. It's Prudence who has to have the operation."

Malcolm ate a piece of chocolate pie (Freya started with flour and bitter chocolate) and went off to his quarters at the Tower of Creative Scholarship. When he had been appointed, there had been the usual academic joke: "I hear you've been sent to the Tower."

HIS STUDIO was on the twelfth floor, where all the studios of the creative scholars were located. Everything at the Tower was creative; so the creative scholars had studios. Actually, the studios were one-bedroom apartments with living-room, study, kitchen, and bathroom. Malcolm could have lived in the Tower with Freya and saved the rent of a house, but neither wished to do so. Since he had a two-year appointment, the Foundation had paid for moving their furniture.

He always gave a glance to the enormous mural in the foyer of the Tower, as a gesture of respect to another form of creativity. The style was capitalist realism with an echo of New Deal-Mexican. Excessively muscular scholars bent over desks, pointed their fingers at significant passages in holographs, and engaged each other in animated discussions. Two scientists seemed about to have a wrestling match for the possession of a microscope.

Above the elevators was the motto of the Tower: "SOLITUDE AND EXCHANGE."

Immediately upon entering his apartment, Malcolm went to the bathroom, picked up his whisky bottle from the floor, and poured himself a drink in the toothbrush glass. He replaced the whisky beside the Clorox.

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The classicist next door and his wife were having a party. The party was coming through the wall. Soon someone was singing to a guitar:

And she went down to the river-o
And she went down to the river-o
And her heart was sore sad

And she went down to the river-o
And she went down to the river-o
And she leapt into the flood.

Malcolm lifted his toothbrush glass to the wall. "Solitude and exchange," he said.

The scholar on the other side of him was a quieter neighbour. A retired general, he was writing a manual on physical fitness for civilians. Malcolm drank another toast, to the general's silent wall.

In his study, he spread the copies of the laminae on the work-table and set to work. His work, at this stage, consisted of staring at the sheets until conjectures for the meaning of unknown words came into his mind. He wrote the conjectures in a large bound notebook, although it was unnecessary to do so. He never forgot any of his conjectures, and most of them became established meanings.

"The magistrate assumed that his *dlorg* would recognise the justice of an adverse decision and so was not prepared for the animosity that followed." That was in an historical account of some kind.

Another lamina—this one belonging to a collection of aphorisms—had: "A father cannot be a *dlorg*; a mother cannot be a *dlorg*; a brother cannot be a *dlorg*; a sister cannot be a *dlorg*."

A third lamina, in a narrative about a love affair, had: "'I am truly your *dlorg*,' she said, and handed him a ripe apricot. He pared it with a knife, and everyone laughed." Malcolm did not understand across fifty-two centuries what the joke was, but it suddenly came to him that *dlorg* meant "friend."

It was only six years since a graduate student had found the stuff and had guessed that it was important, in spite of its unpromising appearance and its occurrence in the wrong stratum. (The graduate student got married and never took her degree.) Radiocarbon dating showed that it was 5,200 years old. A group of chemists, physicists, and art restorers went to work on it. They were able to separate many sheets of thin wood, which had been coated with a resin. Under ultra-violet light, what looked like cursive writing in an unfamiliar alphabet was faintly discernible. Eventually, a combination of chemical and physical methods made it possible to copy the fragile laminae, and a body of text accumulated. Copies that emerged from the whole technical process were like personal letters elegantly written in black ink. They were facsimiles of what was no longer there.

So *dlorg* means friend, Malcolm thought, making a note in his bound workbook. But what is a *kez*?

Julius Rabbison had insisted that *kez* meant "baby," but Malcolm had opposed that conjecture, although he had had none of his own to offer. "You'll come around," Julius had written him recently. "My best regards to Freya."

He knew now—recognised for the first time—that Julius was right. A *kez* was a baby, and this *kez* was a girl baby, "cleft with a subtle promise." Now he was able to set down:

We drink the new milk together,
New friend, who are old on earth,
Who already pulled your ear lobe so and so,
Teaching in the winter academy
When I was a new baby cleft with a subtle promise.
This I write under your eyes
(A teacher's eyes), but what words
Have come from our milky lips
To pass between us and dissipate in the air
Shall be a secret between the air and the warm cow,
Who drops her blameless dung.

She was dead. She was dead. Not only dead, but dead fifty centuries or more. A good hundred lifetimes by older standards.

NEXT DOOR the party was banging and crashing. It sounded as if someone, or several persons, were smashing the Foundation's china plates one by one.

"Stop him, God-damn him, somebody stop him." The voice of the classicist was audible

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in the intervals of shattering noise. "I told you, God-damn you, that I should have stayed at Columbia."

"Knock it off, mack," said a man, who sounded like a bouncer but obviously could not have been. Whoever he was, the smashing stopped immediately, and Malcolm thought how interesting it was that "knock it off" meant at one moment of human connection "stop smashing dishes."

The party sank to a decorous murmur. Malcolm softly read aloud the English he had just set down in verse form. Then he read aloud the original text from a copy of Lamina 96, using Rabbison's system of pronunciation instead of Hawley's. Then the decorum was broken once more behind the classicist's wall. The voice of the classicist's wife rose without warning: "I only wish to God we had stayed at Columbia. I gave up my degree programme for this."

Nobody answered her, possibly because wishes about the past are known in several disciplines to be futile. Or possibly somebody answered her quietly.

MALCOLM GAZED at the black script of the poem in the original language. Whatever the original colour of the ink, the technical process had revived a human being's handwriting. He imagined that it was the handwriting of the woman herself he was looking at, though he knew how improbable that was. The hand was more probably a scribe's, for in this particular hand were writings that included dissimilar poems (evidently composed by a man), portions of an historical work, and what seemed to be a manual on smelting copper.

Maybe she was a woman scribe, Malcolm thought. Or maybe she actually wrote all those other works. He allowed himself the luxury of thinking unscientifically.

The letter that had the sound of *n* in *trana* seemed to Malcolm particularly beautiful, with the delicate oval loop that characterised this hand. He moved about the room quickly, hiding from sight in filing cabinets all papers except the copy of Lamina 96. He took a sheet of white paper and put it on the writing table beside the reproduction of the poem.

She wrote it for me, he thought, under my loving eyes. Now she is far away, and I will write a poem to her in her own language.

How ridiculous, how presumptuous, he thought. I couldn't even write a passable poem in English. I didn't even try to translate her poem into English poetry but just made a literal translation. I'm not a poet. He remembered a dean at one university where he had been a visiting professor. This man wrote poetry, which he read in coffee houses. He was generally known as "the beat dean"; he was dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Malcolm smiled; he had the sensation of being a good friend to himself—cheering himself up in time of grief. No, he thought. I will not try to write her a poem. I am a scholar, unlike the beat dean, but she is a poet, who has been my student. She is far away, and I will write her a letter.

Dlorg vessa jis, he began. "Dearest friend." He could write the script smoothly, but he had to struggle for satisfying expressions in her language. Occasionally he cheated by making up words—adapting Sanskrit or Sumerian to the grammar of the language. He leaned on his elbow, close to the table, pulling at his left ear lobe. He told her how he missed her, how the taste of that milk—and of her lips—was in his mouth now. If only he could visit her: but as she well knew he was in exile, because his services to the people had aroused unworthy jealousies. Could she not visit him? In the kingdom where he was living out his term he was the guest of a great nobleman who housed him in a magnificent tower. "Come to me, come to me, come to me," he wrote.

About half-way down the page, he used a word for which he had proposed the conjectural meaning of "faithful one" in a non-subservient, non-moralistic sense—it might be rendered "truelove." It was a romantic word evidently. He wondered that it did not appear in the girl's poem to him. He guessed that it might have been too naïve a word for her to use in a poem. But he was not a poet writing a poem. He was just a plain, good

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man writing a letter, and he could afford to use it. He wrote to the girl dead fifty centuries, "You are my truelove."

He jumped up then. Useless, useless, she was useless to him. The dead were useless. They did not burn around one in the fire of forgiveness for the unknown crime: only a living woman could. And, furthermore, she was too sophisticated for a woman poet. He wasn't sure now he liked that "new baby cleft with a subtle promise" as much as he had. And that last line about the "blameless dung" was in bad taste in a young girl's poem. He crumpled his letter and threw it in the waste-basket, a tube of bronze-coloured metal encased in transparent plastic. His only trouble had been that his continence with Deborah had left him still restless. After all, Freya appreciated a little attention.

He dialled his house number, waking Freya up, and informed her that he loved her dearly. That was the signal: she was to turn up the thermostat, take a bath, and school herself not to mention her friends' troubles for half an hour. I'm pretty lucky, Malcolm thought. Deborah never uses a vulgar expression of speech, and Freya never wishes to God we had stayed at Amherst.

Olfactory Pursuits

Often, unobserved, I smell my own hand.
I am searching for something forgotten.
I bang the door behind me, breathing in.

I think that a bitter or candied scent
is like a signpost pointing backwards
on which is writ no place and no distance.

So I walk towards a Verulamium,
your ruins or my ruins. The sun's ambushed:
fleeing on the ground the same, large shadow.

Look up. There's no smell to the colour blue.
The wind blew it right through the spaces
between clouds. Christ, what is it I'm after?

I dream, without sleeping, of things obscure,
of houses and streets and temples deserted
which, if once visited, I don't recall.

Here are a few stones instead of a wall,
and here broken stones instead of a house.
Hopelessly, with odours I conjoin.

My footfall echoes down old foundations,
buried mosaics, tomb tablets crumbled,
flints in the grass, your ruins or my ruins.

A man sniffs the back of his own hand,
moistens it with his mouth, to sniff again,
to think a blank; writes, "The odour of stones."

Dannie Abse

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Theodore Roethke

Supper with Lindsay

(1962)

I deal in wisdom, not in dry desire.
Luck! Luck! that's what I care for in a cage
And what fool wouldn't, when things from sleep
Come easy to the sill, things lost from far away.
Behold, the Moon!—
And it stepped in the room, under his arm,—
Lindsay's I mean: two moons, or even three,
I'd say my face is just as round as his,
And that makes three, counting his face as one.
"What Moon?" he cried, half-turning in mock fury.

And then it spilled:
The sudden light spilled on the floor like cream
From a knocked over churn, and foamed around
Us, under the chair-rungs, toward the cellar door.

"Let's eat!" said Lindsay. "Here we've got the Moon,
We've got the living light, but where's the food?"

"Sure, we still eat," I said. "Enough! Or too much."
—"That means Blake, too?"

When Lindsay bent his head
Half sideways in the shifting light,
His nose looked even bigger than it was,
And one eye gazed askew. "Why, Blake, he's dead,—
But come to think, they say the same of me."

When he said that, a spidery shape dropped down
A swaying light-cord, then ran half-way back.

"That's never Blake," said Lindsay. "He'd be a worm,
One of those fat ones winding through a rose.
Maybe it's Whitman's spider, I can't tell,
Let's eat before the moonlight all runs out."

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So we sat down and ate ourselves a meal,
But what we ate I can't remember quite:
Cornbread and milk, ice cream and more ice cream,
With cold roast beef and coffee for dessert—
Mostly I remember the ice cream.

After a while the light began to wane
And flicker near our legs like kerosene
Burning in sand. "It looks like I should go,"—
And Lindsay heaved himself from my old chair.
"The spider's gone," he said bemusedly.

"Who called me poet of the college yell?
We need a breed that mixes Blake and me,
Heroes and bears, and old philosophers—
John Ransom should be here, and Rene Char;
Paul Bunyan is part Russian, did you know?—
We're getting closer to it all the time."

I walked him through the grill and out the gate
Past alder lane, and we gabbed there a while.
He shook my hand. "Tell Williams I've been here,
And Robert Frost. They might remember me."

With that, he hitched his pants and humped away.

Robert Conquest

A Seattle Parkland

In Memory of Theodore Roethke

I

To light winds, tawny sun,
Recrossing ripples stress
The pool with arcs of dark
—Simple and intricate
As the opening oleander,
The opening heart, the run
Of tawny hair, light dress.

What words make movement tame?
The bright elms hack down deep,
Roots racked through a rocked soil;
That endlessly exploding
Sun blasts through the crackled
Corona's harshest flame;
The glib aches in their grip:

"From the claws of a heart's crab
Loss tears the harmonies
Which make, which spring, which stun,
When the breadth of the breathed air
Freeze down to a clenched crystal
Pinching to one thin stab
Of twisted fire that sun. . . ."

What says? Here's true!—This air,
Its warmth not wrenched beyond
To leave such shriek, such void.
That sun's a real all;
And a right concentration
Still laps the forearm's sheer,
Still lights the grove, the pond.

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The rock, the long sun fade.
All strength must sparkle there.
I find the light and sweet
A bough on a tough tree.
Her skirt moves in a mood.
Power? A leaf that's swayed;
A shake of tawny hair.

II

This sleek air sifts through green
Riffling lawn and leaf;
Or rubs up the rough nap
Of disaligning hair;
Or presses the green blouse
To scarcely need to mean
All nakedness beneath.

—Though that's taut to transform
The day, tingling, young,
With extra wow, woosh, wahay
And sting of light, ache of
Something in the ribcage
That swarms and is warm
To what's so stressed, strung.

"Clawed iron of the burst
Bulkhead splits and rips
Where the drag of the drowned heart
Lugs up the cry of poem
That turns life inside out,
Cold tons sloshed through rust
On salt-peeled clammy lips . . ."

When's wreck? Where's bitter reef?
—Elms rinsed in a light haze,
The senses break with stress
And let me through to love.
I am wherever she is,
An image sprung to life
At the focus of green eyes.

Through blanks of scent and sound
Flame beats that pale sky off
The face that shows no mood,
The slightly parted lips:
Wildfire in the eyes
Looking beyond, beyond,
To love, to love, to love.

III

It hacked on through a rough
Year; grace groped at fog;
Love stepped in the town's slush.
The grey deposits of
Water, soot, sulphur,
Awkwardly wiped off
On air like an icy rag.

Momentum trundles love
Through years, lead in the scale,
Where under the weak violences
All horror boils around.
—Proportion, thighs and elms,
And all the delicate, tough
Clarities shall prevail.

And if the flame-front sweeps
That bellowing white-hot stain
Out from ground-zero's eye,
Or slit-eyed police-troops rave
More coldly through the streets,
The carbine in the ribs,
The arc-lamp in the brain

If we fall, we fall,
But in the even-there
If live, live worse but with;
In filth of doctrine, flame,
Bone-rot or broken bone,
Best if that swamp recall
Its springs: bed, torrent, air.

The green leaves feel her cheek.
Light, blood, are equal things.
We master the great words.
I take her voice, her touch.
The world is as it is.
What sings could also shriek,
But just the same it sings

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Column

WHILE England was winning the World Cup, and George Brown was lapsing into his final incoherencies as Minister of Economic Affairs, and the world looked with some bewilderment and dismay at swinging London and its dizzily swinging government, I was blissfully in the Hebrides and such matters seemed of no more importance than if they took place on Mars; indeed, in a space age, rather less. It is quite astonishing how, in a different environment, one can almost overnight totally forget the affairs which normally the mass media insistently force on one's attention, but perhaps this is because they only engage one on the most superficial level, and neither one's heart nor one's mind is truly involved. To me, who am an addict of the daily press, devouring every edition as it appears, this simple fact comes every year as a surprise during the holidays; lack of newspapers, unlike cigarettes or drink, leaves no unsatisfied want behind, and all those affairs which normally fascinate me, so that I wake up every morning wondering what has happened during the night, in my own country, in the United States, in China, the Soviet Union, Iceland, Timbuctoo, are as if they had never been.

Then what takes their place in one's mind? It seems absurd to think that all the attention which public affairs normally claim from one is simply withdrawn and lies fallow, ready to be stimulated into life again when one returns to London and finds that three policemen have been murdered. In the Hebrides, at least, all the attention one had at one's command was entirely absorbed by the pleasures of the senses, all the more vivid certainly because in London they are so often blurred and confused by the multiplicity and complexity of the impressions which modern urban life pours in upon one. The island where I stayed had about two thousand inhabitants, nearly all concentrated in one tiny town; the rest of it belonged to the seven thousand deer which roamed its hills and shores as freely as the buffalo once roamed the North American prairie. At first, the sight of a stag poised on the skyline, immobile, nostrils lifted, antlers aloft, struck me as so strange and startling as to be almost unearthly; soon, it was the stag that seemed an inevitable part of the landscape and oneself that struck one as out of place and even in a way rather creepy.

One evening I walked along the island's single road, the land falling away in the west in a long dreamlike vista of hills and lakes and islets, and as I turned a corner came upon a herd of sixteen deer. They did not move as I passed, though they were only a few feet off the roadside, but simply gazed at me mildly out of their velvet eyes, as if I were something infinitely queer and improbable, like a flying saucer, and so utterly removed from anything that concerned themselves that I hardly stirred their curiosity, much less their fear.

But it was not only the deer that the island belonged to. It belonged to the salmon and sea-trout that inhabited its lochs and straits, to the seals, pansy-black and white, that basked on its rocks, to the otters that dived and curvetted in its streams, to the birds, the elegant tern, the Beardsley oyster-catcher, the cheeping wheat-ear, the long-necked cormorant, that swooped and skimmed over its land and water. One thought of "Sailing to Byzantium":

Birds in the trees—
Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born and dies.

and indeed in its silence and isolation the island seemed the scene of some marvellous natural festival from which only human beings were excluded.

It was divided by waterways into a network of lakes, and islets and capes and promontories, and sea and land so interpenetrated one another that one hardly knew which element one inhabited. We went by boat along serpentine straits from loch to loch, between walls of rock that were hung with black moss, the short grass on the hills made of some artificial material like soft green plush; on the rocks the seals lay languorously beside their babies, until startled by our approach they slid silkily into the water and swam for safety. The bare grey and green sea-and-landscape had a dreamlike quality, as if nothing in it had changed for centuries, and only distance, not time, prevented one hearing across the waters from other islands the bells of those Celtic saints who so unimaginably long ago had first brought Christ to Britain. Water lulls me into strange trances; it was hard to decide whether the island was immeasurably old or had been created that morning.

On a particularly beautiful day, the sun shining from a flawless sky, we followed the winding chain of the lochs to the open sea which beyond us stretched away unbroken to

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America, so far that one could have sworn one could see the curve of the earth's surface. The sea was as blue as the sky, placid and heavy, with a surface like oiled silk, and a slight heat haze so that the islands which enclosed the great gulf in which we lay shimmered like a mirage, and in its crystalline depths great marine forests of weeds and plants lazily stirred their foliage, black, umber, green and purple. On most of our shores today this marvellous foliage of the sea has been destroyed; here its exuberant rubbery blossoms spread themselves luxuriantly in the green shadows of the water, like the fretted sculpture of some sunken cathedral. And on shore also nature seemed to have created strange architectural forms of her own, rocks and cliffs carved into flying buttresses, vaulted grottoes, fallen columns and arches hung with seaweed, all part of some marvellous structure that stretched out from the shore into the depths of the sea.

Later, my companions fished in the loch that had been dammed to form a natural reservoir in which the sea salmon could spawn more easily, leaping up falls by which they could return to the sea. The loch looked like a gunmetal disc tossed among the bracken; the salmon leaped, arching their backs like drawn bows of silver, and the lines of the fishermen described flashing arabesques of gold, like Eastern filigree, in the afternoon light.

*

SUCH SCENES make so delicate, and yet so powerful, an assault upon one's feelings, that they seem at least to convey some kind of meaning, of something which is mysterious, and compelling and withdrawn, and a person like myself is led almost inevitably to try and find some kind of counterpart for them in poetry. This I am sure is a mistake; the feelings themselves may be an illusion, and in any case I do not think that poetry is about them. Yet why, in the Hebrides, should one have thought continually of Marvell's "Where the remote Bermudas ride," more especially since today his image of the Bermudas has been ruined by Fleming and Bond? It was easier to return to Yeats, for after all, though this was Scotland and not Ireland, if the landscape had a mystery, it was undoubtedly a Celtic mystery. The hill outside my window could so easily have been Ben Bulben; the fishermen at the loch those to whom in his will Yeats left both faith and pride, those

That climb the streams until
The fountains leap, and at dawn
Drop their cast at the side
Of dripping stone.

Yet other lines of Yeats raised a problem rather than offered illumination.

We dreamed that a great painter had been born
To cold Clare rock and Galway rock and thorn,
To that stern colour and that delicate line
That are our secret discipline
Wherein the gazing heart doubles her might.

Major Robert Gregory, the son of Lady Gregory, of whom Yeats entertained such high hopes, was prevented by his early death from satisfying Yeats' ambition for him; yet one is justified in suspecting that even if he had lived the odds would have been against his doing so. For it is a curious fact that cold Clare rock and Galway rock and thorn, the stern colour and delicate line, which Yeats saw as essential elements of the Celtic landscape, never yet have inspired a great painter to a masterpiece, and this is as true of Wales and the Hebrides as of Ireland. Why should this be so? For it would be easy to assume, as Yeats did, that a landscape which so intensely stimulates the senses must one day inevitably imprint some images of itself on a painter's eye which, translated into paint, would seize forever all its mysterious hints and suggestions.

In fact no painter ever has done so, in a way that is at all adequate to the kind of emotions inspired by the landscape of the Celtic world; the great painter of whom Yeats dreamed has yet to be born. Why should this be so? Is there a purely material explanation that landscape painting is essentially a bourgeois art and has only flourished where the bourgeoisie has flourished; whereas, during the centuries in which landscape painting achieved greatness, the Celts have been a poverty-stricken peasant people who could not afford such luxuries? Rock and thorn do not easily support a great painter. Or are there purely technical reasons why the light and colour and shapes and spaces of the Celtic world do not lend themselves to painting; are there in fact some landscapes which are not paintable, and if so, why? Or is it simply that there are some landscapes which, like that of the island, are already so perfect and complete in themselves that they make no demand upon the painter, and that in them nature has already created masterpieces of a kind which have nothing to do with painting, and to which a painter could add nothing? I do not know the answers to these questions and I wish that someone, preferably a painter himself, could tell me what they were.

*

RETURNING to London from the island, I felt even more acutely than before the general intellectual confusion that has been

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caused by the government's measures to meet the economic crisis; it is as if we have still not quite got used to the sight of Mr. Wilson standing on his head. The *Observer,* as if aware that economic experts have on the whole signally failed to make clear to us our real situation, and the reasons for it, has in despair called upon Miss Katharine Whitehorn to give us a child's guide to the mysteries of the pound; writing for beginners, she has, in the *Observer*'s eyes, the recommendation of being a beginner herself, as if those who teach babies should themselves be babies. A beginner myself, I looked eagerly to her for help, but alas, she does little better than the experts. The economy, she assures us, is "overheated," and "Overheating is Bad." Moreover, "the efforts of successive governments to cool it off are like Humphrey Bogart kicking the boiler of the African Queen because someone has dropped a screwdriver down the safety valve; they work, but they may slow down the boat." There is of course something rather attractive in the idea of Bogart playing the parts of Mr. Selwyn Lloyd or Mr. Callaghan, and in the African Queen as an image of the British economy, but otherwise I can make no sense at all of this elaborate simile; how does the screwdriver come in? If this constitutes the *Observer*'s idea of a child's primer of economics, I must confess that I am not even out of the nursery.

But perhaps one ought not to blame Miss Whitehorn too much for writing such nonsense, when she is only following a practice hallowed by much more advanced students of her new subject. Almost all discussions of our current economic difficulties are today heavily overladen by elaborate similes and metaphors which are hardly more helpful than Miss Whitehorn's, and to the freeze on wages and prices there should now be added an absolute freeze on the use of metaphor in the discussion of economics; there are moments when one feels that those who try to explain our economic situation to us are a peculiar breed of rogue poets who by some terrible mistake have wandered into the wrong subject.

Perhaps this would not matter much, because after all most of their audience do not take their little flights of fancy, their slices of cake and their money chasing goods, instead of being spent on them, too seriously. But by now one has the uneasy suspicion that such metaphors are not so much an aid to explanation as a device for concealing a failure to understand; this suspicion is part of a more general uneasiness that gradually and in some cases almost imperceptibly the economic situation not only of this country but of the western world as a whole is in some way getting out of hand, and that without some concerted effort on an international scale to set it right the process is bound to accelerate.

Perhaps such premonitions are too pessimistic. They are provoked largely by thoughts of what happened during the great depression of 1929–33, and, as everyone has been assuring us for years, there is no real comparison between what happened then and now, or between the degree of control which nations, together and apart, could exercise over their economic affairs at that time and today. But there is a genuine comparison between the ways in which governments, which are composed of fallible human beings, behave in situations which they do not understand; between the ways in which, in a continuing crisis, they continue to resort to measures which have already proved to be incapable of solving it; between their tendency to assume that, even if these measures should fail again, there is not really any alternative. In these respects, and others, there are genuine resemblances between the situation in 1929 and today, even though the particular economic problems with which the western world is faced may be wholly different.

In those days much was made of the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty. Soon in this country, and perhaps elsewhere, we may have the equal paradox of unemployment combined with an absolute shortage of labour. The second problem may prove to be as intractable as the first if governments conclude that, in our economic knowledge, we have still not progressed much beyond the immortal axiom of Mr. Micawber's with which Miss Whitehorn concludes her baby's primer: "Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds, ought and six, result misery."

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THEATRE

Ideas and the Drama (II)

By John Weightman

TO PURSUE my reflections about ideas and their relationship with theatrical realities, I return to Shaw, three of whose plays have been running in London recently. The first thing that strikes me about them is that their ideological content is no guide to their chronological order. Anyone going to see them without knowing their dates of composition would, I think, be justified in putting them in the following sequence: (1) *The Doctor's Dilemma,* (2) *You Never Can Tell,* (3) *Man and Superman.* Actually, *The Doctor's Dilemma* was written last (1906), ten years after *You Never Can Tell* (1895–7) and about three years after *Man and Superman* (1902–3).

The Doctor's Dilemma is the most old-fashioned, because the action hinges on the preservation, in the mind of a typically pure Victorian heroine, of her noble illusion about her profligate husband. Jennifer Dubedat would not be out of place in the novels of Charles Garvice, a late exponent of Victorian convention, and one of the interesting features of the recent performance was the suspicion that Miss Eleanor Bron, by the lushness of certain inflexions, might be slightly guying the part, as she has guyed Victorian ladies on television. Also, the play presents the "science" of the doctors as being limited and largely erroneous (a reaction against the positivistic confidence of the mid-century), whereas "art," as practised by Dubedat, is immediately recognisable as work of genius, all of a piece and ultimately beyond moral considerations (a *fin de siècle,* avant-garde assumption). It is true that Shaw juggles with both these attitudes in such a way that one cannot always be quite sure whether he is committing himself to them or not, but he is undoubtedly serious at some points which are difficult to manage in a present-day performance: after Dubedat's death, Jennifer has to come in "beautifully and wonderfully dressed, and radiant, carrying a great piece of purple silk, handsomely embroidered, over her arm," and again, at the posthumous exhibition, she is "beautifully dressed." On both occasions, Miss Bron's get-up caused a slight titter. This did not do the play any good, because it gave a "camp" quality to something that Shaw meant to be quite on the level. He presumably accepted pre-Raphaelite and Tennysonian sumptuousness as being the highest form of contemporary art. Generally speaking, as I shall argue in a moment, *The Doctor's Dilemma* acquiesces in Victorian conventions about aesthetics and society more than it fights against them.

You Never Can Tell and *Man and Superman* appear more Shavian because they voice the philosophy that has remained associated with Shaw's name. The ultimate value in them is the Life Force, which operates essentially through the female characters, and for purposes that are left undefined. This belief in the Life Force is an off-shoot of the science about which Shaw is so sceptical in *The Doctor's Dilemma,* but it is not in itself a scientific attitude; it results from a fusion of evolutionary theory with old-fashioned Deism and is, in fact, a faith. It has the tactical advantage of allowing Shaw to roll Good and Evil together in a humorously optimistic way, but it has the strategic disadvantage of making tragedy, or even genuine seriousness, impossible for him. What is so deceptively comforting about his plays is that they all rest on the breezy assumption, which is never expressed in so many words, that the Life Force is ultimately doing everything for the best, whatever mistakes it may commit, or blind alleys it may get into, on the road to the final goal. This is really very close to the Leibnizian view that Evil is a disguised form of Good, since it is part of the total economy of the universe, which God must have organised in the best possible way. Shaw can therefore never present a really wicked character: Ann, for instance, is quite unscrupulous in her determination to get hold of John Tanner, but she has to be forgiven her scheming and lying, since she is in the grip of a power greater than herself. In the present production, Miss Sian Phillips plays her with a slightly viperish intensity that has a trace of irreducible evil in it; this is an interesting enhancement of the part, but it tends to make her into a "real" character in a different metaphysical system, instead of keeping her within

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the Shavian pattern of innocent agents of the Life Force. Crampton, in *You Never Can Tell,* has been a child-beater and, for a few seconds, one might suppose that evil has been "real" in him, but very quickly he turns into a cross old buffer, who is his own worst enemy. Nor can we believe for a moment in the abject poverty of either Blenkinsop, the one-and-six-penny doctor or Valentine, the five-shilling dentist, because they are both whisked off to delicious meals with their charming friends. Shaw may have been an Ibsenite, but he cannot bear to show nastiness in action in his own works.

IN BOTH THESE PLAYS, the action rushes gaily to its conclusion, as if the Life Force were a bracing, teleological wind blowing the characters along in a definite direction, in spite of what they themselves may think about their opinions and intentions. The barrister, Bohun, who appears in the last act of *You Never Can Tell* like a *deus ex machina* (through a possibly unconscious inspiration, Shaw makes him come in straight from the ball wearing a mask, like a primitive god or oracle) is really the Voice of the Life Force: "You may think you are going to do this, but in fact you are going to do that . . . etc." And the message is really very simple: all the young and marriageable characters will come together to carry on the race, and the differences which divided the older ones will fade into insignificance. A similar lesson emerges from *Man and Superman*; for some unknown reason, the Life Force wants certain men to fertilise certain women, and no argument about immorality or amorality, or even about personal preference, can be allowed to stand in the way. Curiously enough, Shaw transposes the traditional concept of the *mariage de convenance* on to the level of the Divine Will. Tanner doesn't *want* to marry Ann, but the Life Force, the immanent *pater-familias*, says he must, presumably for cosmic dynastic reasons. It follows that Shaw, although he bandies ideas about a great deal in these two plays, is basically asserting that what has to be will be, and moreover will be for the best. *You Never Can Tell* means: man proposes, the Life Force disposes. It is a strange paradox that Shaw, despite his reputation as a reformer, despite his Victorian obsession with work, despite all the bustle in his plays, is fundamentally a Quietist who doesn't believe to any important extent in the drama of the human will or in the clash of human passions. He knows, and indeed states, that all theatre is based on conflict, but in his case the conflicts are always of a secondary nature; they are eddies within the current of the Life Force. They are never primary, because if they were, he would move from farce or comic drama into serious drama, or his farce would have undertones of tragedy, as Molière's has. It is perhaps this absence of primary conflict that makes some people dismiss his theatre with exasperation. A writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* recently referred to the plays as being "empty"; I don't think they are that, but I would agree that, because of the absence of genuine evil, there is something eunuch-like about them, in spite of the brilliance of Shaw's intelligence and his constant insistence on the sexual tussle.

AS I CAME OUT from *The Doctor's Dilemma* I heard a middle-aged woman say in scandalised tones, as if she herself were dismayed at the blasphemy she was uttering: "Well, if you ask me, Shaw has dated!" The Moliéresque attack on the doctors has certainly faded (as in Jules Romains' *Knock*, now forgotten but a world success only thirty-odd years ago), because medicine, by and large, is now genuinely scientific, whatever may be the shortcomings of individual doctors. The endearing old charlatan, B.B., doesn't ring true any more as a doctor; he sounds more like a comic parson, or public relations officer, or professional politician, i.e., someone whose main function is not impersonal analysis but suggestion and reassurance. The implication that science is a perpetual rediscovery of old truths is also an exploded joke. But these two flaws could be accepted as period attitudes which Shaw could not avoid and were in fact true in his day, if the central action of the play had been given its full importance. Actually, there is no dilemma, because the choice is not between saving the immoral genius, Dubedat, or the virtuous nonentity, Blenkinsop. The option is too flimsily contrived to be at all convincing, and remains an empty theatrical device. The real tension is between Ridgeon and Dubedat; Ridgeon admires Dubedat as an artist, yet at the same time passes sentence of death on him (a) because he is an unscrupulous egotist who uses any means to serve his art and satisfy his appetites, (b) because, if Jennifer finds out about him, her world will be shattered, (c) because Ridgeon himself vaguely hopes to marry Jennifer (however, this last reason is very weak). Ridgeon is, strictly speaking, a murderer, but Shaw gives him no consciousness of guilt, although he is obviously intended to be more intelligent than the unconscious murderers, such as B.B. He is slightly punished at the end for reason (c), which is unimportant. It is as if Shaw approved of Ridgeon and, while giving Dubedat his head up to a point, had to kill him through fear of the triumph of art

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over morality, although of course, in the death-scene, he "onions the handkerchief," exactly as he accuses Shakespeare of doing. In arranging things in this way, Shaw is denying values that one would have expected him to be in favour of. Jennifer is an intelligent, emancipated woman, but he implies that it is better for her to live happily with a partial, "beautiful" illusion than to know the whole truth. Dubedat's existence is of priceless value; he is a genuine Superman, one of the successes of the Life Force, a very rare producer of Immortal Art, i.e., of something which transcends the mere process of living; he is a fruit on the Tree of Life, not a mere utilitarian leaf or twig, like most other people. Yet Shaw, with a rather uncomfortable mixture of jokes and fine writing, kills Dubedat, as if the provisional moral laws of society and the "nice" illusion of one individual were, in the last resort, of greater importance than the eternity of art. It is his fundamental timidity on these two points which produces a slight blur at the centre of the play and makes it "Victorian," in spite of its superficial iconoclasm.

In all three plays, Shaw's subversiveness occurs as incidental statement; it is not worked into the basic structure which, as has often been pointed out, respects the conventions of the well-made bourgeois play or traditional farce. One could even go further and say that the structural message is necessarily conservative. The plays are not sugar-coated intellectual pills; the intellectuality is in the coating and the pill would probably be condemned by any good Sartrian as a core of *mauvaise foi*. *Man and Superman* is accompanied by "The Revolutionist's Handbook," but it leaves things exactly as they were; the characters are all rich dilettanti and the action is concerned with the problem of who will marry whom, not with the reorganisation of society. Indeed, Tanner, the author of the handbook, is shown up as an ineffectual blatherer. The conflict in *You Never Can Tell* is again simply a question of personal relationships within the wealthy upper-middle-class. Shaw says himself that this play is a "fashionable comedy":

> . . . far from taking an unsympathetic view of the popular preference for fun, fashionable dresses, a little music, and even an exhibition of eating and drinking by people with an expensive air, attended by an if-possible-comic waiter, I was more than willing to show that the drama can humanise these things as easily as they, in the wrong hands, can dehumanise the drama.

The production at the Haymarket Theatre certainly has an enchanting fizziness and probably provides the best evening's entertainment at present available in London. Yet Shaw does not endanger conventions, as Beaumarchais did, say, in *Le Mariage de Figaro*; he makes them vibrate and twang, but he is careful not to humanise them, or is incapable of humanising them, beyond the point at which they might embarrass himself and the audience by becoming too real. The action remains within the realm of witty pastoral, like that of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, about which Shaw was rather cool. For instance, the central character in *You Never Can Tell* is the waiter (marvellously hammed by Sir Ralph Richardson, as if he were trembling on the brink of dotage or a stroke), but he never goes beyond the limits of the wise old retainer who knows his place. He is allowed freedom of speech up to a point—like the chauffeur in *Man and Superman* and the old housekeeper in *The Doctor's Dilemma*—but, like them, he is never permitted to become a full person in theatrical terms, and his moment of pathos, when he is thrown off his balance by the unexpected appearance of his son, is as condescendingly "racialist" in feeling as if he were a touching negro in an American comedy. In other words, Shaw is goodhearted, but his sense of the social hierarchy is absolutely ingrained; he can understand an exceptional person finding his or her own level (like Bohun in *You Never Can Tell* or Eliza in *Pygmalion*) but he cannot fully sense the human reality of the people who remain on the lower levels. In this respect, he is imaginatively inferior to Chekhov, who is absolutely innocent of class prejudice, while perfectly aware of the interplay of class feelings.

It follows then, if my impressions of these three recent Shaw productions have any truth in them, that Shaw, the ideas man and social reformer, is one person, and Shaw, the playwright, someone rather different. Perhaps he was mistaken in accepting the stereotypes of 19th-century drama as completely as he did, since stereotypes may have their own inertia, however vigorously they are manipulated. Martin Meisel claims, in his book *Shaw and the Nineteenth Century Theatre*, that the tendency of his playwriting was

> . . . not toward "passion incarnate," but toward a drama of incarnate ideas. . . . Shaw simply made ideas into passions of the mind.

For Shaw himself, no doubt, ideas were passions of the mind, but they are voiced through his characters rather than incorporated in them; the debate moves on one level and comes to a close like a shower of sparks falling to the ground; the social clockwork operates on another level and with a strange slowness, in spite of the impetus of the Life Force.

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Intellectual Left

"THE INTELLECTUAL," like "the Left" itself, is a European label which doesn't always fit English luggage. If each is mistily defined, their interaction in this country is mistier still, to the frustration of observers and observed alike. The more obvious causes are widely known. The empiricism of English thought, the gentleness of English politics, the strange counter-revolutionary seepage of talent between the English classes—all these have encouraged intellectuals, like other individual careerists, to leave the structure of society alone and concentrate on acquiring a country cottage, a gentlemanly self-sufficiency, an ideologically neutral calm.

On the whole, the English are proud of this, as of other obscurities in their national life: loose definitions are thought to be a fair price for avoiding sharp conflicts. The great, cultivated, established, middle class congratulates itself on not having lost the clever children it produced—driven, in other countries, into embattled Bohemian enclaves. The intellectuals themselves are not always so content. But their discontent does not settle on society so much as on the Left itself, which seems (unlike society) to have no place for them. Envious eyes are cast across the Channel, sour judgments passed about the sleepy privacy which English thinkers inhabit. There can hardly be a member of the National Film Theatre, a subscriber to the *London Magazine*, a teacher with literary ambitions or a journalist with academic pretensions, who doesn't sometimes tell himself that they order these things better in France.

Even so, if a visiting Frenchman asked about the present state of play between Intellectuals and the Left in this country, he might be given a superficially imposing answer. He might be told of the generally acclaimed "radical consensus" or "new classlessness" of student communities, sufficiently Left-wing at least to frighten the Right-wing press; he might be urged to read the works of theory produced by politicians out of office (Strachey, Crosland, Crossman, Jay) or academics in action (ranging from cultural criticism with the widest social implications—Raymond Williams or Richard Hoggart—to the most practical and detailed suggestions for extending welfare—Richard Titmuss, Peter Townsend or Brian Abel-Smith). He might be bombarded with novels of social protest (*Room at the Top, Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, The Golden Notebook*) or with some of those works of 'fifties picaresque which, if not Left, were certainly unambiguously cut off from the assumptions of the Right (*Lucky Jim, Living in the Present, Eating People Is Wrong*). He might be sent to see the films made from these or similar novels —or from plays—whose common factor would seem to be a slightly woolly populist realism (*A Taste of Honey, A Kind of Loving, This Sporting Life*). He might, more obviously still, be sent to the theatre to see Wesker or Osborne, or to observe the widespread influence of Brecht, and afterwards read the criticisms of Kenneth Tynan, Penelope Gilliatt or Charles Marowitz. His nose might be rubbed in Centre 42, or in Miss Jennie Lee's appointment as Minister with Special Responsibilities for the Arts.

OUR FRENCHMAN might be proffered, as a gamut rather than a distinctive category, *Conviction, Out of Apathy, New Fabian Essays, Towards Socialism, The Socialist Register*. Back numbers of *New Left Review* would make an impressive pile; so would the corpses of such extinct publications as *Politics and Letters* (edited, incredibly enough, by Mr. Raymond Williams and Mr. Wolf Mankowitz) or the *New Reasoner*. He might be told that the Labour Government for a time included a well-known novelist whose narrator hero often asserts (though less securely demonstrates) his status as "a man of the Left." Or he might be reminded of how, before the general election of 1964, Transport House issued a list of prominent writers and artists who had "pledged their support" for the Labour Party. It was quite a comprehensive list, and it seems unlikely that the Conservative Central Office could have matched it without some scraping of the country's intellectual barrel.

ISN'T ALL THIS an impressive intellectual array? Well, no. To a stranger it might be, but a jaundiced native eye can soon see the cracks under the paper. The "instinctive Left-ishness" of educated people, for example, turns out to stem from counting voices rather than heads. Student magazines may make radical noises, but university Conservative clubs draw a large silent membership. (At the Oxford teach-in on Viet Nam, the Foreign Secretary was loudly applauded for his defence of the American position; but not one of those who presumably agreed with him asked a question of any anti-American speakers.) A factual study of political allegiances at universities has not yet, I think, been made. One might guess that graduates, undergraduates and teachers would

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repeat the national pattern of a fairly even split between Left and Right, with a heavy concentration around the centre.

Specifically committed academic work is a more complicated problem. The Right-wing historian or economist is more likely than his Left-wing counterpart to proclaim a split between his political convictions and his intellectual life. Trusting to the secret ballot, he will do Right by stealth and urge his professional colleagues to ignore intrusive dogmas. A Left-wing scholar may conversely worry about his subject's autonomy; he may feel that its neutrality is not a glory but a snare. The heroes of Raymond Williams' novels—one an economic historian, one a sociologist—are both torn by doubts of this kind.

Now the Right's academic impartiality may be a fraud.

> "When I am asked," [wrote Alain], "whether the distinction between parties of the Right and parties of the Left, or men of the Right and men of the Left, still has any value, the first thing I think is that the man who asks the question is certainly not a man of the Left."

But, genuine or not, the stance encourages the Left to overrate its own statistical strength. So does the leisure enforced on politicians in opposition; it would indeed have been surprising if thirteen years of Conservative rule had not driven some Labour luminaries to their typewriters. Thirteen years of Labour rule might even produce some works of Tory theory, inimical as Toryism is to such a thing; it might also attract to the Right some of the cantankerous *esprit d'opposition* of which intellectuals unfortunately enjoy so high a share. The absence of academic political theory of the Right (not altogether dead, as Maurice Cowling or Professor Michael Oakeshott would remind one) has probably done the Left as much harm as good. The unchallenged flabbiness of "progressive thought," from Sunday papers to undergraduate essays (not a very long distance sometimes) draws much of its weakness from intellectual monopoly.

A SUBJECT-BY-SUBJECT analysis of the academic world would need knowledge both deeper and wider than that possessed by the present writer, who can only offer the following impressions. In history, some remarkable works by Left-wing scholars have been produced: E. J. Hobsbawn's *The Age of Revolution*, for example, or E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*. In economics, there has been no shortage of able Left-wing practitioners, but incomparably the most influential popular work was done by an American, John Kenneth Galbraith. Among established English pundits, there seems to be one Colin Clark for every Andrew Shonfield, and an irritating mannerism prevalent on both Left and Right is claiming to be in a minority against the conventional wisdom of the profession. Among sociologists, as I understand it, there is some dispute between a radical and an empiricist school, accused respectively of Messianic delusions and conservative false neutrality. The idea of quantitatively measuring social systems and attitudes is obviously anathema to a certain brand of don't-look-too-close Toryism, and it is usually the "radical" party in university politics that campaigns for more sociology courses.

I am quite unqualified even to offer impressions on the political tendencies of scientific work, but certainly the striking of public political postures by individual scientists appears to be less common than it was in the heyday of Haldane and Bernal. This might be an appropriate place to state my intention of not discussing Lord Snow's "The Two Cultures": I remain unconvinced that an astronomer and a nutritionist have a common language which binds them together and excludes an architect and a logician, or *vice versa*; or that the first pair are in some sense Left-wing because they "have the future in their bones," while the second grumble at modernity and would like to take refuge in the political ideas of Yeats and Pound.

THE CLAIM that the Left has *all* the best writers cannot, however, be strongly supported. The post-war record is patchy at best. The only paper to take up Transport House's 1964 manifesto was the *Mirror*, whose version of the message wasn't, perhaps, such a debasement after all. (The headline ran TOP PEOPLE, TOO, ARE VOTING LABOUR.) To have "intellectuals" from Iris Murdoch ("top writer and university lecturer") to Humphrey Lyttelton ("top jazzman") voting Labour is nice for the Labour Party, but an intellectual contribution to socialism is something else. It's not the same, even, as influencing the votes of others, which Osborne, Sillitoe or Lindsay Anderson may have done.

The "literature of protest" of the 'fifties is not likely to put future or foreign socialists in its debt. It belongs to social rather than literary history. The gossip that has surrounded such writers, the crude tendency to see them in terms of trend and fashion rather than in terms of creative endeavour, isn't entirely an injustice foisted on them by a corrupt press or a gullible public; it also reflects a lack of independent strength and interest of their own. Those who take the sneer shall perish by the sneer. To be a sort of anti-*Daily Express*, a self-appointed balance of propaganda, is not useless, but it is

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not exactly inspiring. This is not intended as a general statement about political literature—a genre which has produced masterpieces—but about the level of it we have enjoyed recently. Does anyone doubt that Golding will last longer than Sillitoe, or Pinter than Wesker, or Larkin than Logue?

If we turn from the creation to the administration of the arts, things do not look much better. Neither the Round House at Camden Town nor an increased grant for the Arts Council make much of a socialist summer. Respect for good intentions can only take one so far. Of course, the whole subject is a marsh in which many reformers of "the quality of life" have perished. "Nothing miscarries like schemes for merriment," said Dr. Johnson.

BUT THE LEFT has a particular burden to carry here. In an interesting section of his book *The Future of Socialism*, published in 1956, Crosland argued that the Labour Party should include in its aims some increase of "liberty and gaiety in private life" (as if gaiety in public life were already assured) and pointed out how inimical the Fabian tradition was to such indulgences. Fabian sternness may have been a necessary reaction (as Marx's was) against an earlier romantic utopianism aimed at a society of imaginative richness and free love. But, said Crosland:

> Today we are all incipient bureaucrats and practical administrators. We have all, so to speak, been trained at the LSE, are familiar with Blue Books and White Papers, and know our way around Whitehall. . . . Now the time has come for a reaction: for a greater emphasis on private life, on freedom and dissent, on culture, beauty, leisure, and even frivolity. Total abstinence and a good filing-system are not now the right signposts to the socialist Utopia: or at least, if they are, some of us will fall by the wayside.

Anyone who has had personal contact with the sourness of the British Left will endorse these recommendations, though he may feel rather more despairing about the possibilities of change. Certainly those who are loudest in denouncing the present blanketing of cultural talent are not those best fitted, either by force of intellect or by warmth of character, to improve it. One has only to visit a constituency party function to feel less than confident of the future Labour offers culture.

THE LEFT is not necessarily or naturally the home of intellectual excellence. In a country where intellectual activities are largely confined to the well-off, it is not surprising that the party of redistribution should encompass some Philistine traditions.

The whole idea of intellectual excellence is an individualistic, even an aristocratic one, which must arouse suspicion in co-operative or collectivist ranks. As Raymond Williams has remarked: "Working-class culture, in the stage through which it has been passing, is primarily social (in that it has created institutions) rather than individual (in particular intellectual or imaginative) work." By juggling with the anthropological and the intellectual senses of "culture" Mr. Williams has managed to disguise the uncomfortable fact that, as Samuel Butler said, the Devil has written most of the books. The Peoples' Committees do not have much of a creative record: partly because creation is better carried on by individuals, partly because the People have been unjustly denied access to so many of the sources of creative inspiration—education and leisure, for example, if not suffering.

It is true that the Labour Party made some rash promises before the 1964 election about the harnessing of science, the enrichment of private life, the release of energy for all those lively Left-wing minds. But the nearer we approach to real intellectual territory—as opposed to dinner-parties for tame artists—the more we move in a world where advance cannot be guaranteed by a well-drafted White Paper. Not that intellectuals do not enjoy being asked to dinner-parties (or, if they have not been invited, questioning the motives of those that have). Both governments and intellectuals may make glib claims as to what the one should or could do for the other. ("I came to the cool conclusion," wrote Norman Mailer, "that I had won the election for Kennedy with my piece in *Esquire*.")

INTELLECTUALS' DEMANDS may be unreasonable, unserious, or plain un-Left-wing; they have a particular tendency to be based on fashion rather than justice, flair rather than equality. Such demands might be as well satisfied by a sensitive dynasty or an authoritarian commissar as by a democratic socialist.

Kennedy's prestige among intellectuals owed little to his own intellectual qualities (though something to his patronage of genuine intellectuals) and still less to a Left-wing domestic programme. He was principally popular because he had style; and style is, to say the least, not a Left-wing monopoly. In an interesting essay, Diana Trilling suggests that Kennedy's appeal to American liberals was that of a man who accepted inherited wealth and family position in a society dedicated to the exhausting proposition that every man must make himself from scratch. Intellectuals, who transmit and conserve as well as create culture, are particularly

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susceptible to this appeal. It may do them no discredit, but it doesn't establish their essential Leftishness—nor the treason of a Left-wing government that fails to please its intellectual supporters.

CAN ONE ROUND on the intellectuals, then, and accuse them of having failed the Left? Is it true that they are confined by the blinkers of bourgeois empiricism (as Marxists allege) or of infantile Marxism (as bourgeois empiricists allege) and have consequently failed to give the necessary lead? Certainly a study of this country's intellectual record since the war blinds the eyes with smoke, but rarely warms with true fire. Tawney's remarks on the 'thirties come to mind: "Invitations to hunt tigers were issued by sportsmen with whom a brave man might well hesitate to shoot rabbits."

Two things, however, should be remembered. The first is that we use the word "intellectual" loosely, both for the producers and the disseminators of ideas; and we should not castigate the former for the latter's obvious inadequacies. It is one thing to take on Dr. Balogh or Mr. Alasdair MacIntyre, and quite another to work off our hostilities towards the queue at the Hampstead Everyman or the readers of *Private Eye*. We shall not get far in discussing unilateral disarmament if we stick to rude remarks about beards and guitars—although these may be relevant at some stage, just as *Private Eye* is. Anthony Hartley's sensible book *A State of England* (1963) suffers a little from understandable impatience with the low quality of many of the ideas he deals with. They should not necessarily make us cry fie on the age, or on the Left. To compare *Declaration* with *Culture and Anarchy* is really too harsh to be serious.

A SECOND CAUTION is this: when comparing England since 1945 with other countries and ages we may be so carried away by the search for Left-wing intellectuals that we forget how arbitrarily not only genius, but also historical experience, is distributed. The absence of intellectual distinction is not, like the presence of gross injustice, an evil that reform could always remedy. The absence of Left-wing intellectuals may indeed be a sign of health rather than disease. Set post-war England beside periods when a radical intelligentsia flourished—the English 'thirties, late 19th-century France, the hopeless wastes of Tsarist Russia—and its unremarkable record may not seem so black. We can hardly blame a society for removing the conditions that inspired an Auden, a Zola, or a Herzen, nor blame that society's writers for not *being* Auden or Zola or Herzen. Reformists must do the best with the worst their contemporaries do; writers must do the best with the talents they have. The creators are not responsible, in either case, for shortages of raw material.

WHAT RAISED such hopes, then, in the first place? Why should anyone today *expect* English intellectuals and the English Left to find common ground?

One inevitable answer, befouled as it is with all the journalistic shoddy thinking of the period, is that "the intellectuals" were drawn since the war from a wider social background. As trend-spotters never tire of pointing out, the public-school-educated, wine-drinking, long-haired, half-homosexual stereotype has given way to a grammar-school, beer-drinking, short-haired, heterosexual one. It would be nice to let well-raked muck lie, but so many misconceptions encrust this phenomenon that I hope to be forgiven for playing with it, and soiling my hands a little.

It was believed that the "grammar-school revolution" would revivify and democratise English intellectual life. The universities were to pour out a fertilising stream of scholarship boys on to the parched earth of a mandarin élite; journalists, broadcasters, teachers, minor intellectual officials of all kinds would inherit—and transform—the earth. To some people, amateur sociologists or professional snobs, these products of the Butler Act are the nub of England today, the obvious starting-point for a discussion such as this. Kenneth Tynan self-consciously spoke up for them after Somerset Maugham had expressed a rather acid admiration for the author, if not the hero, of *Lucky Jim*. He wrote in the symposium *Declaration* (1957):

> You are among the sixty per cent of undergraduates who are receiving financial aid from the state and your position as such was defined, fearlessly and without equivocation, by Somerset Maugham in his Christmas 1955 message to the *Sunday Times*. "They are scum," he said.

Have the so-called scum, in fact, now they have risen to it, changed the surface?

I HAVE SAID that English intellectuals are too closely integrated into English society to form a distinct body—still less a distinct body with Left-wing opinions. Even this is an over-confident generalisation. Consider the late 19th-century galaxy described by Noel Annan in his essay "The English Intellectual Aristocracy."

This tangle of Macaulays, Trevelyans, Huxleys and Darwins intermarried, bred dynasties and—perhaps most important—held academic and administrative posts. Sons were heads of colleges, daughters took pioneering firsts in

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classics, cousins ran the British Museum, uncles were great headmasters, wives produced a whole new constellation of scholarly and established relatives. Anything less like Chekhov's shaggy students could hardly be imagined. But this situation did not turn every thinking man into a supporter of the status quo. Thomas Arnold, Mill, George Eliot, Tennyson and others may be placed within some great spectrum where liberal faith and conservative strictness meet, but hardly William Morris, Ruskin, Carlyle, or Matthew Arnold. And it was precisely the descendants of Mr. Annan's aristocracy—Haldanes, Stracheys, Cornfords, Bells—who formed the nearest England ever had to a formal radical intelligentsia. Strong as English institutions are, one might expect the traditions of nonconformity—or plain nonconformity without benefit of tradition—to thrive on the grammar-school revolution.

"Here am I," wrote Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier,* "with a bourgeois upbringing and a working-class income. Which class do I belong to?" Today an intellectual is more likely to have the attributes in reverse—a middle-class income and a working-class upbringing. Such a state has its tensions—thoroughly documented in the literature of the 'fifties—but it is hardly, in times of full employment, a forcing-ground for revolutionaries. People tend, as Tawney remarked, to take on the character of the class they arrive at rather than the class they start from.

IN ANY CASE, the idea that grammar schools would produce fiery insurgents could only have occurred to a group as well insulated as the English ruling class from contact with its inferiors. From the playing-fields of Eton (I speak from experience) the world outside may look like one vast *jacquerie*; from a little nearer, divisions and sub-divisions appear which should in fact bring joy to the hearts of the privileged, if they would only condescend to look. Raymond Williams rightly protested against the idea that "absorbing the scholarship boy" is the only readjustment our society needs. He did not add that it is fairly hysterical to suppose that the scholarship boy will prove so difficult to absorb. The grammar school is not so far from the public school as the public school likes to think. Its predominantly middle-class pupils are more likely to prop up local Conservative associations than to tear down the temples of our gods. The Labour Party was only a short head in front of the Tories in adopting a member of the meritocracy as its leader.

IF ANYTHING, it might be argued, the public school is more likely to inspire revolt, even if a shallow kind. Orwell himself nursed lifelong grievances against his prep-school—where he was the only boy too poor to pay for a cake on his birthday—and against Eton. John Strachey wrote in 1934:

> I have a stock answer to dear old ladies who ask me, "And why, Mr. Strachey, did you become a Communist?" "From chagrin, madam," I reply, "from chagrin at not getting into the Eton Cricket Eleven."

The role of the public school in forming—and perhaps distorting—socialist ideas in the 'thirties, a role that is at its most obvious in Auden, is worthy of study. For better or worse, the grammar-school education that might be thought more characteristic of a post-war intellectual is unlikely to inspire any such feelings. The county high school is a place to work in (and work too hard to run a dissident magazine or invent the Watcher in Spanish) not an embryo political society. Kingsley Amis, in *John Bull's Schooldays,* pointed out that he and one other contributor seemed to be the only ones who didn't have memories of something like the Inquisition; they were also the only ones to have avoided fully-fledged public schools. Richard Hoggart's description of the bright working-class child's schooldays is less warm, but equally reassuring to those in fear of social upheaval: "He can snap his fingers at no one and nothing; he seems set to make an adequate, reliable and unjoyous sort of clerk."

I AM NOT ARGUING that to be a full-blooded socialist it is necessary to be born well-off and to learn the spirit of revolt in boarding schools. But two myths have grown up around the social origins of the new intelligentsia. The first is that the country is either flourishingly or alarmingly Left-wing (depending on the speaker's viewpoint) because of it; the second is that if only it could be more productively employed the problems of our culture would be solved. Neither of these assumptions is true.

The old technique of inoculation has worked again: we are probably nearer to Noel Annan's state of balanced symbiosis than we were in the 'thirties, when the absence of jobs gave young intellectuals the stimulus that their upbringing might have muffled. The intellectual aristocracy may have had to widen its intake, to accept some dilution of the hereditary principle—to become, in fact, an intellectual bourgeoisie; but what other oligarchy has not had to make similar sacrifices? It is still an élite, functioning smoothly within society and doing well for itself.

Only its female members are underpaid, underemployed, frustrated; and they are driven to neurosis rather than revolt. Equality of the sexes was another middle-class liberal doctrine

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that may have receded rather than advanced in a short-term levelling-up. "Women are second-class citizens," as the heroine of Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* asserted. It is here, if anywhere, that we must look for the torments of informed alienation. Not much will be found that the Left, in its present state of mind, can build on.

THE NOTION of an emancipated working-class intelligentsia is part of the flotsam of recent British introspection. But even as a truth, it would be a truth of a low order. To criticise such a group would be criticising the queue at the Hampstead Everyman, the clay from which general discontent might be moulded. The mesh of such definitions will trap only small fish. The more a thinker's work is of real intellectual interest, the less relevant is biographical information. (This did not on one memorable occasion prevent two such distinguished thinkers as Raymond Williams and Richard Wollheim from hurling their social origins in each other's faces in full view of the readers of the *New Statesman*.) However, the age a man lives in exercises an influence of a more important kind, providing not only his audience, but his material, the ideas available at the time and the facts available to modify them. Critics may transcend biography, but not history, even if history's limits are largely negative.

Recent history has not been helpful. The exigencies of the cold war made it difficult for Marxism—an important ingredient, to say the least, for any coherent Left-wing intellectual movement—to be taken seriously in the west. There was McCarthyism, and its tiny British offshoots: to carry on fellow-travelling in the face of persecution or vilification needed some courage. More obviously, there was Stalinism: to turn a blind eye to the oppression of eastern Europe needed some dishonesty. Theoretically, of course, an intellectual Left is not necessarily dependent on Marxism, and Marxism is not necessarily dependent on the good or bad behaviour of Soviet Russia. Exceptional talents might have given intellectual history a shove in the opposite direction. They did not. The years of Koestler and Orwell were marked by a sourly defensive ideology of private integrity and political pessimism. The unassuming empiricism that had won—or, at least, not lost—the war was to keep the English Left of the 'forties sensibly free from the heresies of the previous clever dishonest decade.

As for imaginative literature, it was spirit rather than matter that got into print—and fairly Right-wing spirit at that. The years of Koestler and Orwell were also the years of *Four Quartets*, *Brideshead Revisited* and *The End of the Affair*. They were even, as David Pryce-Jones has pointed out, the years of Angela Thirkell. To make the superficial Left-intellectual case outlined above, one has to concentrate heavily on the years after 1956. Whatever the Attlee Administration may have done, it neither released nor inspired intellectual energies. It profited by the despised Newstatesmen, as Attlee called them, but it did not breed their successors.

THE FOLLOWING YEARS did little, either by political conditioning or individual example, to produce a renaissance. Even the most chauvinistic commentators have quietly buried that dismal phrase of the early 'fifties, "the new Elizabethans." The post-1956 years have been scrutinised by Mr. Hartley, in the volume mentioned above. His diagnosis is that England had suffered from a double blow which bruised the intellectual area of the body most conspicuously: the loss of power abroad, and the disillusioning half-success of welfare at home. *Hinc illae lacrimae,* he argued, struck by the overwhelming undirected bitterness of the literature he studied.

One may agree that this is how things have turned out, without necessarily forfeiting the right to criticise. Similar circumstances might, granted the freedom that clever men ought to exercise, have produced different cases. The loss of empire, for example, might be expected to prove a great relief, particularly to a mainly anti-imperialist body of opinion: a great burden of guilt shuffled off, energies reorganised and concentrated at home, reaction defeated, the cause of liberal indecision removed. Alas for the naïvety of such Little England hopes! Apologists for the Empire have become still more apologetic spokesmen for the Commonwealth; our moral mission to civilise the world by force of arms has become one to cow it by unilateral example into peace. As the critics of CND tirelessly pointed out, the "moral leadership" party were the new chauvinists—more attractive than the old ones, but far more out of touch with England's position in the world.

NATIONS have to wait a long time to digest the lessons of past hegemony. The Spanish intellectuals who formed the "generation of '98" could still find it necessary to proclaim their slogan "Put a padlock on the tomb of El Cid." We shall be lucky if 1998, even 2098, has done the same for the tombs of Raleigh, Nelson, or Kitchener. So far the intellectual Left has not remotely matched the anti-imperialist contribution of earlier years. It was easier to be Hobson or Orwell, apparently, than it is to accept the implications of what they

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wrote: that there is no reason to expect, once our armies have retired, that our traders or teachers will be more welcome than necessity dictates.

Left as well as Right is in the grip of the nostalgia for glory that grips the whole country —however ironical the Left may be about it. How many who shed *bien-pensant* tears at *Oh What A Lovely War* did so with a mixture of incredulous admiration at a country powerful enough to be so stupid? Over-confidence also has its joys, and everybody must feel some regret for the loss of them. How much Left-wing writing still depends for its sting on the imperial theme, from the repetitious thunder of King Street to that mad Middle Eastern expedition that provides the crux of *The Entertainer*. Whom we chasten, we also love—including the machinations of the British Tanganyika Company and the country's last flourishes east of Suez.

Of course they are not beyond criticism: the crocodile can do damage with its dying bite, and should be restrained from doing so. But there is a widespread conviction that our colonising predecessors, for all their faults, were not only more energetic but more interesting than ourselves, and that their preoccupations have set a pattern which we must gloomily follow. The attention paid by the press to ex-colonies is a partial confirmation of this. Do we really need to read every detail of news about Ghana, and hardly a scrap about Guinea (let alone Iran, or Brazil, or, until war put it on the cynical editors' map, Viet Nam)? Books on Africa stream from the publishers and threaten to flood literary editors' offices and reviewers' desks. The great piles of erudition, grand pyramids of intellectual retribution for war and trade, lend a new density to the idea of the white man's burden. That idea is far from dead, merely sterile. It is we who need liberating now—from the imperial imagination.

As for the partial failure of the Welfare State—that it has removed the grounds of obvious indignation without creating a new fellowship—this is also an unpleasant truth which should not deter statisticians or economists, but has slightly deflated poets and novelists: unreliable creatures, particularly when caught in a tradition that taught them to speak up for mass suffering and to distrust, as palliatives of the bourgeois liberal mind, a concentration on minority rights and individual cases. While post-war England has not eliminated poverty, we do seem to have crossed some reverse Hegelian line, where quality is diminished to mere quantity; from being the huge base of a pyramid, the most oppressed have become a tapering inverted pyramid below the original one, invisible to all above. The injustices of society are no longer enough in themselves to impose an instinctive Left-wing orthodoxy. Jimmy Porter's complaint that there are no large brave causes left is not true, but it rings true enough to give anyone a superficial excuse for laziness. And writers are usually very lazy—not least when it comes to political thought.

As prosperity has increased in England through the 'fifties, the writer has not only lost a subject; he has gained an income. In a market of colour supplements and television discussions, he is open to various temptations—not merely to give up being Left, but to give up being intellectual. Mr. John Fowles, in a book called *The Aristos,* has a few good sentences on this contemporary breed, whom he calls "visuals." A taste for pop-culture can have the most impeccably demotic roots; there is a blow to be struck for jazz and gear against the old Bloomsbury rigidities of wine and French quotations. But unless one is merely to set one snobbery against another—and all snobberies, being manipulated commercially, end up dependent on the financial status quo—one must return in the end to considered thoughts carefully communicated. For these, print is still the best medium.

Is it impossible to make a revolutionary film or an uncompromising television item? Certainly not; but the temptations to be blandly decorative are always greater in a visual medium. One begins with the desire to show how frightful slums are, and ends by making even slums look pretty. Consider, for example, the filmwork of Mr. Tony Richardson, or the typical mock-controversial item on the B.B.C. Such things are tendencies, not iron laws; it is in the nature of genius to resist them. It can only be repeated that in the absence of genius intellectual activity will be driven where tendencies point. Where all tendencies point to more communication, more social content, more allegedly meliorative reporting, genius may be driven into isolation and mystery.

I do not agree with this diagnosis, but I think it may be true that we look too closely at the models of the past for our ideas of what Left-wing literature should be like. Times may not have changed very much, but they have changed too much for us to expect Shaw, Brecht, Dreiser, or even Dickens to rise again.

Indeed, even if times had not changed at all, we could not expect creative writers to apply an old formula. They must, through vanity and through genuine sense of what art

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is for, struggle for originality. If the political scene does not offer them original material, they will not hew very closely to it. So far we have considered changing conditions that explain the relative poverty of Left-wing intellectual life in this country today. We should perhaps consider an exactly opposite hypothesis: it is precisely the lack of change that has muffled and discouraged the voices we expected to speak. Imaginative writers—as opposed to academics—can hardly be expected to hammer away at old truths long since proved and long since ignored. *The Golden Notebook* once again provides an appropriate quotation:

> We spend our lives fighting to get people very slightly more stupid than ourselves to accept truths that the great men have always known.

This is not much of a role for a writer.

I read a science fiction story recently in which travellers from earth were confronted with a form of life which could imitate any piece of equipment so perfectly that they could not tell the difference. A man looked through a pseudo-microscope, and it tried to strangle him; another put on a pair of pseudo-gloves, and found his hands irresistibly drawing his blast-gun and turning it on himself. Perhaps the most striking of all was a man who got into a pseudo-spacecraft; as he sat in it the instrument panel melted stickily, and liquid dripped agonisingly on him. In his death-throes he recognised the smell: a gastric acid. Would it be too far-fetched to take his fate as a text for the English radical? One steps into English society, and finds that it is not a spaceship but a stomach; one expects to be transported, and is merely digested. There is not much that intellectuals, outside the creators of horror-comics, can do with such a subject.

IT IS AN ORTHODOXY that we live in times of great change. It would be dangerous to hear this endlessly reiterated even if it were true, since it induces the soporific feeling that change is too vast for anyone to alter, and too automatic to need accelerating. But we may further suspect that it is quite false: that life in England has changed far less in, say, the past forty years than in the previous forty years, the 1880s to the 1920s, or the forty years before that. Our most acute social observers now deal with minutiae rather than with vast currents: compare George Eliot with Colin MacInnes or Angus Wilson and you will find differences that are not only due to George Eliot's greater talent.

Angus Wilson is indeed a doubly interesting case. His great comic talent lies in detail—the exact turns and horrors of Knightsbridge speech or Purley decoration. But this talent is at the service of profound convictions, both social and moral, about wide issues. If one were to declare Angus Wilson a successor to E. M. Forster, or even to Dickens, he might be modestly surprised, but I do not think he would claim that one had missed the whole point of his work. And yet this work—I doubt if I am alone in finding this—is far stronger in the details than in the grounding. However intelligently and justly planned, the large incidents, the crucial confrontations, the moral showdowns, always seem to me the weaker side of the bargain. Is this because Wilson's skill is essentially miniaturistic? Or is it because the trivialities can be matched from most readers' experiences, whereas the grand-opera parts seem intrusive and artificial in a society which has carried muffling and evading such things beyond an art and as far as a principle?

Another 19th-century comparison: many people, on both sides of recent cultural debates, have expressed their admiration for Matthew Arnold, and pointed out that a great many of his points are still applicable today. Does this show that Arnold's insight was far keener than our contemporaries'? Or, more depressing still, does it show how little progress we have made? On recently reading Tawney's *Equality* I was similarly struck by its persistent relevance, and I did not know whether to admire the author or despair of change.

In David Mercer's television play *The Birth of a Private Man*, a young Polish writer remarks that he would hate to be a British socialist: it must be like going to a funeral and coming back to find the corpse installed in an armchair. At other moments in the play, there is a hint of envy for Poland and other countries where some "real" and bitter struggle is going on—even, perhaps, a suggestion that the hero's difficulties are a product of England's relative ease. This argument is a familiar one, even if my extrapolation of it is unfair to Mr. Mercer's intentions. It has an economic parallel: if only this country had been occupied, and its industrial plant destroyed during the war, we could have installed the completely new machinery we now lack the incentive to get.

Both arguments have rightly been criticised as arm-chair advocacy of disaster. There is something unpleasant in complaints that one has not been fortunate enough to enjoy other peoples' misfortunes. These arguments could be put better: apathy and outdated plant are the prices we pay for lack of change and freedom from defeat in 1940. Or, less pessimistically still, we cannot hope to have without some sacrifice what others acquired so bitterly. Nobody would call for the return of mass unemployment to produce another Auden, or boy chimney-sweeps to turn someone into a new Dickens.

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EXCITING COUNTRIES, easy to write about and hard to live in, have always existed. England has not always been one of them, and is not one now. Perhaps there is some truth in that unpalatable dictum that the revolution has no need of the poets, but the poets have great need of the revolution—at any rate, if they wish to write political poetry. However, there are always other options, and good precedents for them, and some times when they are the best to hand. It is no good *playing* with fire; in an asbestos room it is not even dangerous.

Francis Hope

Censorship at the British Museum

The "Private Case" & Other Mysteries — By PETER FRYER

"LIBRARIES CALL *in computers to catch up on knowledge.*" This was the headline of an article by Sir Frank Francis, the British Museum's director and principal librarian, in *The Times* of 29 June 1966, promising push-button book-lists and other benefits of automation at some unspecified future date. A few days after this article appeared, the manuscript students' room began to exhibit a "FULL" notice at five-past-ten each morning, and offered the unprecedented spectacle of disappointed scholars queueing to get in. A fortnight later, readers were having to wait a good two hours for their books after applying for them in the reading room, instead of the normal thirty to sixty minutes. The annual summer influx of readers from universities at home and abroad was under way.[1]

This contrast between promise and performance is sadly typical of the British Museum today. There is no shortage of Wellsian visions of the "new library," with its specialised reading rooms and open access stacks, to be built one day on the chosen site to the south of Great Russell Street. The site was approved in 1955, when a limit was fixed for development to be started within twelve years. In April 1962, Sir Frank Francis told librarians in conference at Leicester that he hoped "something would be done" by 1967. The limit is almost up, and it is now clear that nothing whatever will be done; inquirers at the director's office are informed that "nobody knows" when work will start on the site. Yet, since shortly before he became director in 1959, Sir Frank has been producing a steady stream of articles and speeches telling American, Canadian, Indian, British, and Swiss librarians about the wonders the future holds in store. There was "The Contribution of the National Library to the Modern Outlook in Library Services," in *Aslib Proceedings* (*X*, 1958):

> In the course of the next few years we shall be able to lay the foundations of a new library service which will put the British Museum, in the modern world, in the place it occupied in the world at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of this century.

There was "The British Museum Looks Towards the Future," in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* (*CIV*, 1960):

> I could go on outlining what must sound more like pipe-dreams than the discussion of practical matters and perhaps I am lucky that I cannot at present attempt to give chapter and verse for plans to carry them out.

There was "The British Museum Moves Ahead," in *Canadian Library* (*XVII*, 1960–61) and *Indian Librarian* (*XV*, 1961):

> At the moment I am speaking without any actual plans on paper.

There was "All Change for the Brit. Mus.," in our own *Library Review* (*XIX*, 1963–64), with its reference to

> what may well be the building of the century and certainly the most up-to-date national library in the world.

[1] Three years ago Baron Chuter-Ede and the Archbishop of Canterbury tested the service during a meeting of the trustees' standing committee. To be sure, they were not *incogniti*, but they could provide only the title of the book they asked for, and not the author's name or shelf-mark. They received the book in twenty minutes. See *Parliamentary Debates: Standing Committee A: British Museum Bill* (5 March 1963, col. 42–3).

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And there was "Aktuelle Probleme," in *Nachrichten der Vereinigung Schweizerische Bibliothekare* (*XL*, 1964), with its emphasis on large libraries' need for machines to take over routine procedures and compile specialised catalogues. Those libraries investigating automation included, of course, the British Museum.

Obviously, Sir Frank greatly enjoys planning "for another century," as he put it in his address to the American philosophers. While he dreams up a librarians' Utopia, those who use the *B.M.* library in 1966 must suffer it as it is, with all its imperfections and without, as yet, a single computer. The national library which interests them is the one that exists now. The authorities refuse to make major improvements, since the present set-up is only temporary. All they will do is tinker, piecemeal, without consulting readers and, in some cases, against the staff's advice. Thus, readers are now admitted far more freely than in the past, and no very strict check is made as to whether the materials they need can be consulted elsewhere. But the seating capacity in the reading room has not been increased, and the over-spill into the periodicals gallery and the north library (a reading room for rare books) is greater each summer; so is the pressure on the staff who fetch the books from the stacks. Again, the open access system for recent journals in the periodicals gallery, adopted because "we have to be like other big libraries" has led to the theft and misplacement of many issues; the opportunity for browsing is a poor exchange for the certainty, now forfeited, that one would get exactly the issue one wanted by putting in an application slip. Fantasy about the future does not compensate for failure to consult readers about their present requirements.

Regular readers, grateful to be able to find most of the books they need, grow used to imperfections due to staff shortages, Treasury meanness, old-fashioned accommodation, and a creaking administrative system summed up in the pleasant archaism "keeper." No one can explain why Xerox copies cost twice as much as at the Senate House, five minutes' walk away; why photography takes six to eight weeks; why the ill-ventilated tea-room charges exorbitant prices for poor food and has too few tables for its customers. But these are marginal complaints. A library is primarily a workshop. The acid test of a library is its catalogue and subject indexes; the main function of librarians, the dreary but essential task of writing catalogue slips and incorporating them accurately into the system. If readers are to make proper use of the library's resources, everything else should be subordinated to efficient cataloguing. This is only another way of saying that the librarian's task is to bring books and readers together, to provide each reader with the books he needs. Sir Frank himself has often said as much. He told the Aslib annual conference in 1958:

> Preservation . . . is not our sole function; that of making the collections available to students . . . has equal importance.[2]

In April 1962 he said the trustees wanted to "break down" their eight million volumes so that people could feel "at home in the place" and gain a mastery of the subjects they were interested in. His 1965 presidential address to the Library Association's annual conference included these words:

> We preserve in order to bring the books we preserve into the hands of those who can or need to use them as fully and as effectively as possible. . . . We intend no monopoly, but a community, in learning. . . .
>
> The great value of the British Museum for scholars is the assurance they have that when they go there a very high proportion of their requirements, however abstruse, will be met on the spot and with very little delay. It means that a scholar can follow a hunch while the scent is still strong in his nostrils. It means that the bibliographer can follow up his references without fear of being impeded. It means that what is down in the catalogue is there for the asking.

In *The Library Association Record* for January 1966, Sir Frank wrote:

> It is just not sufficient to have books and periodicals . . . on our shelves; we must help them to help our public and help our public to use us to the full.

And in *The Times* for 29 June 1966, in that article about computers, he wrote:

> Comprehensiveness . . . is the most valuable feature of a great library, but its value is proportionate to the quality and range of its catalogues and to the ease with which its collections can be consulted in depth. If these conditions are lacking . . . users may . . . lose the courage to use the library as they should.

These are admirable criteria by which to judge the British Museum's own general catalogue and subject indexes and the availability or otherwise of the books in the museum's possession. Let us apply them.

[2] He admitted on the same occasion: "We have not really begun to scratch the surface of the bibliographical work required to unloose the information which is under our care; the services we provide are ludicrous in comparison with what is needed."

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The claim is made that the *B.M.* catalogue is comprehensive. The official guide to the *B.M.*'s public services informs readers (*1*) that all the books in the department of printed books (excluding newspapers, maps, and music, for which there are separate catalogues) are recorded in the general catalogue; (*2*) that all books in the library published since 1880 are entered in the quinquennial subject indexes; (*3*) that the full range of books in the department is accessible to any holder of a reader's ticket. Unfortunately, none of these statements is true. The innocent reader who proceeds on the assumption that they are is in danger, should his studies lead him into certain neglected or tabooed fields, of being seriously misled.

One despairs of ever being able to draw up a complete list of classes of book omitted from the general catalogue and from the subject indexes based on it. New categories are always coming to light. While writing this article I found, obscurely tucked away in a library journal of several years ago, a letter from the then principal keeper concerning anonymous children's books. Since 1900, it appears, all such books have been omitted from the general catalogue; and some 19th-century books of this kind are uncatalogued, too. There is in the placer's office an index to these books—including also, I believe, children's games—arranged by publishers, and readers may see this index on request. But how are they to find out that it exists? Admittedly these are not books of supreme importance—though the social historian, who cannot afford to neglect any source, however trivial, may find something in the children's books of yesterday to kindle his interest, and other specialists may learn something from, say, the children's books published during the first World War. Probably the *B.M.* officials have an excellent case for refusing to overload the general catalogue with such ephemerae. But it is deplorable that readers are nowhere told of this omission.

FAR MORE SERIOUS is the omission from the general catalogue and subject indexes of the *B.M.*'s magnificent collection of about 5,000 sexological and erotic works, kept in the private case. To be sure, a decision was recently taken by the trustees—under pressure, and not without considerable resistance from those who warned that the north library would be turned into "a masturbating parlour"—to enter the titles and shelf-marks of these tabooed books in the general catalogue. With this genuflexion before what they are pleased to call "a 'modern' policy,"[3] the authorities seem to feel they have done their duty by genuine seekers after knowledge. The situation remains far from satisfactory, however, especially when judged in the light of the principles laid down by Sir Frank Francis.

In the first place, the entry of private case titles in the general catalogue is painfully slow. At the present rate of progress, it will take years to complete. The work is being done by one assistant keeper, who has many other calls on his time and is not merely copying the private case catalogue, but recataloguing each book. This is a major undertaking in a field which presents notoriously intractable bibliographical problems. Meanwhile the private case catalogue is withheld from readers and will still be kept secret, presumably, even when only a score, a dozen, or one work in it remains to be entered in the general catalogue. This imposes a severe handicap on any inquirer who is trying to do serious bibliographical work in this field. The authorities' attitude is all the more difficult to understand, since two bibliographers have in the past been allowed, not only to see the private case catalogue, but to copy it out. One was the late Alfred Rose—compiler, as "Rolf S. Reade," of the *Registrum librorum eroticorum* (1936)—who worked on it about the year 1934. The other was Mr. Gershon Legman—author of *The Horn Book* (1964)—who spent a week or so transcribing it about the year 1954. Here, surely, is a "monopoly" rather than a "community, in learning."

The regulations do not prevent the officials from answering specific bibliographical inquiries. They consult the private case catalogue on a reader's behalf if he asks whether

[3] This phrase, including the quotation marks round "modern," comes from a letter in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 21 October 1965, signed by Mr. N. F. Sharp, a keeper in the department of printed books. Mr. Sharp thought it "doubtful whether serious students in these fields have been at any considerable disadvantage as a result of the former policy of not entering Private Case books in the General Catalogue."

Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto and Dr. Allan Edwin Rodway, in their *Common Muse: an Anthology of Popular British Ballad Poetry* (1957), while acknowledging the "courteous assistance" given them by the *B.M.* officials, make it clear that they are quite unaware of any unexpurgated edition of *The Merry Muses of Caledonia* being in the museum. Indeed, they thank Dr. David Daiches for the loan of his copy of the "otherwise unobtainable" *Merry Muses*. No one had dropped so much as a hint to these serious students that the *B.M.* possessed, locked away and uncatalogued, not one but *ten* copies of various editions of the very book they sought! The open re-publication of *The Merry Muses* recently has resulted in all ten copies being transferred from the private case to the general library.

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a particular book is in it, and supply shelf-marks and bibliographical details. This is better than nothing; but to work through someone else's brain, eyes, and good-will is time-consuming, frustrating, and the source of many errors and omissions. Moreover, there is the question of accessions. One can never be sure that a book reported to be "not in the British Museum" last week will not be purchased or donated next week. Even when the entire private case holdings have been entered, the inquirer who seeks completeness will still be faced with the task of combing periodically through the general catalogue to catch accessions. There are about 1,300 large folio volumes of the general catalogue, with several hundred pages in each; to search through the whole of this once in a lifetime, let alone once a year, would need more time and courage than most people possess. The authorities justify this interference with scholarship by saying they do not intend to provide a ready-made subject index to dirty books for would-be browsers. On this ground also they propose to continue to censor the five-yearly subject indexes. Private case books will simply not appear. "If you know your subject, you know what to ask for," say officials—blandly ignoring the fact that erotica are published, for the most part, clandestinely and in tiny editions; that the author's real name is almost never given; that imprints are generally false; that many of the books survive in one or two copies only. In any other branch of bibliography, the *B.M.* general and specialised catalogues and even, on occasion, a visit to the stacks can solve a good many of the researcher's problems or suggest where a solution may be found. Research in erotica at Bloomsbury is a jigsaw puzzle in which the missing pieces are kept from the solver until he knows what is on them.

THIS IMPEDING of scholarship is accompanied by a general air of suspicion and disapproval which greets applicants for private case books and compares most unfavourably with the practice of more enlightened custodians of erotica and sexological works. A member of the London Library or of the Wellcome Historical Medical Library, for instance, is not made to feel he is begging a favour when he applies for a book of this kind. *B.M.* practice turns a statutory right ("there for the asking") into a personal privilege. A reader who applies for a private case book is asked to see the superintendent, who examines his ticket. If it is a short-period ticket the application is rejected out of hand: such applications "cannot be entertained," says the duplicated *Information for those Superintending in the*

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Reading Room, issued to certain members of the staff last March. If it is a long-period ticket the superintendent makes sure it is current. The reader is then asked to make a written application, giving his reasons, to the principal keeper. On this written application the superintendent notes the number of the reader's ticket and whether it is current.

"All this is necessary," officials will tell you, "not because we wish to act as censors—*absit omen!*—but because experience has shown books of this kind to be peculiarly attractive to thieves, scribblers, and mutilators. We have a duty to protect public property from such persons."

Indeed they have. But in practice the barriers set up to ensure that only persistent and thick-skinned students get the books, and the desultory watch kept on the winners at the "special table" in the north library, have not been enough to prevent a steady trickle of thefts.

> *Amours of the Kings of France* [*c.* 1845]; *Anecdotes of Female Flagellants* [*c.* 1865]; *Venus School Mistress* (1917); W. J. Chidley's *The Answer* (1911); *Flossie: a Venus of Fifteen* (1904); *The Voluptuarian Museum* [*c.* 1825].

These and many more have been spirited away, by trusted readers or trusted staff, since the 1930s, in spite of the maintenance of a secret catalogue, the censoring of subject indexes, the examination of readers' tickets, the requests in writing to the principal keeper, the endorsement of applications, the automatic rejection of applications from second-class citizens with short-period tickets, the whole fog of furtiveness that envelops the subject of erotica at the *B.M.* No honest reader can object to supervision when he has a valuable book in his hands. If the *B.M.* authorities were really concerned to prevent the theft of erotica they would do two things. They would watch readers, not just pretend to. And they would take photocopies of all the irreplaceable books in the private case, issuing the originals only to readers engaged in strictly bibliographical inquiries, who need to collate, examine watermarks, and so forth.

This last expedient, incidentally, would prevent these *rarissima* from being read to pieces, as is currently liable to happen to some of them. The regulations are not applied with complete consistency. In spite of the claim that serious purpose must be proved, personal friends of officials have always been favoured and still are. I know of two who come in and read what they like, though as far as I know they make no claim to be engaged on serious research. Students of erotica at the *B.M.* in the past three years have included a Bishop and a member of the Northamptonshire Constabulary. But, if due precautions are taken, why should any member of the public be denied access to any sexological or erotic work in the *B.M.*? After all, Lady Snow told readers of *The Guardian* recently that the *B.M.* was the place to go, rather than railway station bookstalls, if they wished to consult Krafft-Ebing. And it was to the *B.M.* that Marie Stopes turned when, an obscure lady palaeobotanist and not yet a famous writer on sex and birth control, she wanted to find out what was wrong with her marriage; her reading enabled her to sue successfully as *virgo intacta* for its annulment. With these examples before us, let no one lack "the courage to use the library as [he] should." If men or women of letters wish to read pornographic books—to satisfy themselves, for instance, about the rights and wrongs of the Steiner-Girodias controversy—what more convenient place than the British Museum? Sir Frank Francis himself has said (according to *The Sunday Times* of 6 January 1963): "We are keepers of books, not guardians of morals."

Many of his subordinates do not share this view, but seem determined to hold up liberalisation for as long as they can. I have been told: "We are *not* having people coming in here on Saturday afternoons to read dirty books." This attitude is a relic of the 19th-century view that erotica were the preserve of rich collectors and amateurs, among whom were numbered two trustees of the British Museum: Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton; and the 27th Earl of Crawford, who was good enough to present 200 pornographic books to the museum in 1920.[4] It is an attitude which helps to perpetuate the obstinate folklore about the contents of the private case, whose scope is far wider than just hard-core pornography. There are a great many scientific works, acquired at a time when sexual anxieties were more easily aroused by the printed word than they are today, and never since reclassified. There are a great many mildly bawdy books which would disappoint the seeker after sensation, even on a Saturday afternoon, and not a few of which are nowadays freely avail-

[4] What a pity that the late George Mountbatten, second Marquess of Milford Haven, did not follow his example. Milford Haven's superb "Album 7," containing about eighty clandestine catalogues and prospectuses dating from the turn of the century, was bought by the *B.M.* a few years ago, about the same time that Sotheby & Co. sold twenty of his books to a private collector for £80. Among other titles in this lot, the *B.M.* does not possess the almost legendary *Love and Safety* (1896). Milford Haven items turn up from time to time both in the legitimate trade and in the Soho bookshops.

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able in paperback. And there are a great many books which social historians, anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, historians of contraception, and bibliographers may legitimately regard as source material and any adult may reasonably wish to sample in the course of a lifetime without being suspected of prurience.[5]

PRIVATE CASE BOOKS important for the history of sexology include William Dugdale's 1832 edition of *The Secrets of Nature Revealed,* a translation of part of Sir Michael Scot's *Physionomia*; Edward Wilmot's 1775 translation of J. D. T. de Bienville's *La Nymphomanie* (1771); Tissot's *Treatise on the Crime of Onan* (1766); Bell's *Kalogynomia* (1821); Rosenbaum's *Plague of Lust* (1901); Forberg's *Manual of Classical Erotology* (1887); and Josef Weckerle's *Das goldene Buch der Liebe* (1907). Even Gilbert Van Tassel Hamilton's *A Research in Marriage* (1929), an interesting anticipation of Kinsey and Masters, is in the private case; early this year some pages were still uncut, which shows how effectively it has been buried. Edward Charles' *Sexual Impulse* (1935), condemned as obscene, is there. So are all the translations into English of studies by that unacknowledged source of much popular sexology, Louis Jacolliot. Erotic and scatological folklore, painstakingly collected by Kopernicki, Krauss, Gaston Paris, and their collaborators, will be found in the twelve-volume *Κρυπτάδια* (1883–1911); erotic slang, in the dictionaries of Scheler (1861), Delvau (1864), Cary (1916), and "Justinian" (1939). All the standard (and several sub-standard) bibliographies of erotica are in the private case, including of course Ashbee's three monumental volumes (1877–85), Louis Perceau's exemplary *Bibliographie du roman érotique au xix^e siècle* (1930), and even Rose's *Registrum,* doubtless because it lists other private case books and gives their pressmarks. *Love's Picture Book* (1959–62) and its Danish original, by Brusendorff and Henningsen, is only the most recent of the many surveys of the erotic art of all periods and races. Dominating the whole field of sexology is the *Bilder-Lexikon* (1928–31), of which Lo Duca's *Dictionnaire de sexologie* (1962), also in the private case, is merely a pale imitation.

[5] Mr. George Steiner sets up a man of straw when he contends that "the locked cabinets of great libraries" do not "contain masterpieces of poetry or fiction which hypocrisy and censorship banish from the light" (ENCOUNTER, October 1965, p. 15). I am not aware that such an accusation has ever been made against the *B.M.* authorities; the case against them has no need of such exaggeration.

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THE PRIVATE CASE is moderately well stocked with erotic and gallant literature of the 17th and 18th centuries, whose continued segregation can only be called astonishing. *Whipping-Tom* (1722), for instance, has nothing to do with flagellation. It is an attack on the female sex for taking snuff, drinking tea, and wearing red cloaks and hoop-petticoats. *The Fruit-shop* (1765) is a kind of history of women, which takes 119 pages to get Adam and Eve expelled from Eden and is singularly unerotic. There are a dozen or so pretty tame pamphlets consisting, in title and text, of extended sexual metaphor, by authors such as "Timothy Touchit" and "Roger Pheuquewell." And there are numerous volumes of divorce court reports; semi-erotic periodicals like *The Bon Ton Magazine* (1792–95); lists of whores, like *Harris's List of Covent-Garden Ladies* (1788, etc.); bawdy tales in verse, like *Drive on Coachman* (1739) and *Kick him Jenny* (11th edn., 1737); jestbooks, like *The Covent Garden Jester* (1785); and that pioneering survey of cloacal graffiti, *The Merry-Thought: or, the glass-window and bog-house miscellany* [*c.* 1750], which shows that such epigraphy was far wittier two hundred years ago.

Innumerable editions of all the celebrated erotic classics are in the private case: twelve, including the first, of Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749); the Sala-Sellon translation (1868) of Martial's *Index expurgatorious*; the 1668 edition of *L'Escole des filles*, the book Pepys read "for information sake" and then burnt; Aretino and Chorier, in several languages; eleven editions of Andréa de Nerciat's *Félicia* (1775), four of *Les Aphrodites* (1793), and three of *Le Diable au corps* (1803), full of all kinds of curious information. Gervaise de Latouche is there, and Restif de la Bretonne, and Sade; and a very early edition, though not the *editio princeps*, which is lost, of the first modern classic of homosexual love: *L'Alcibiade fanciullo a scola* (1651) by Antonio Rocco. Among autobiographers, Frank Harris and Henry Miller are nearly as well represented as they now are in the bookshops. They have latterly been joined, in the private case, by the eleven-volume *My Secret Life* [*c.* 1888–94], the erotic diary of a 19th-century English gentleman, describing hundreds of sexual encounters in flat, convincing, and often harrowing detail, and the subject of two brilliant and probably definitive chapters in Professor Steven Marcus' Kinsey Institute study of *The Other Victorians* (1966).

EVEN THE HARD-CORE pornography is susceptible of analysis into writings of more and of less merit. The Sala-Sellon *Harlequin Prince Cherrytop and the Good Fairy Fairfuck* (1879) and *Cythera's Hymnal* (1870) are extremely funny and, despite their grossness, essential documents for an understanding of the underground resistance to what, *pace* Mr. St. John-Stevas, must still be called Victorianism. The eponymous heroines of *The Simple Tale of Suzan Aked* (1891), *The Modern Eveline* (1904), and *Maudie* (1909) reflect the changing mores of *fin-de-siècle* and Edwardian England: the first receives contraceptive instruction from a woman friend; the second goes out and buys herself a contraceptive syringe; the third draws men's attention to herself by "showing her lovely legs right up to the knee." These books are hardly to be compared to the grimly apolaustic illiteracy of *Moslem Erotism* [*c.* 1900?], *Realistic Pleasures Gathered from the Diary of a Sybarite* [1900?], which could just as well have been "printed at Alexandria," as its title-page claims, and my own favourite titles: *Lovely Nights of Young Grils* [sic] *Served Up Seasoned and Prepared for Amatory Feasts* [*c.* 1895?] and *The Lustful Memoirs of a Young and Passionated* [sic] *Girl* (1904). Yet even these specimens, apart from being unintentionally comical, are not without a certain scientific and historical interest.[6]

SOME RECENT DISCUSSIONS of pornography have tended to concentrate on books associating erotic excitement with pain and humiliation. Many find this association disturbing or disgusting and believe that the behaviour of immature and psychopathic persons may be influenced by such books. But few of those who advocate restrictions on the free distribution of sado-masochistic erotica would, I imagine, wish to prevent their being available at the British Museum. The very extensive collection of these writings in the private case, so far as it offers any evidence at all, suggests that they serve as a safety-valve for persons with sadistic tendencies. It is interesting also to find a striking similarity between this fantasy literature and the periodical outbreaks of discussion in Britain on the punishment of children.

There are some notable examples of these discussions in the private case: *Letters Addressed to the Editor of the Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* (1871), for example, as well as five big parcels full of the documents issued by Mr. Eric A. Wildman and his late and un-

[6] And even among the Olympia Press pot-boilers, which Mr. Steiner judges with, on the whole, condign severity, some readers may find more "nuggets" than he allows. *Play This Love with Me* (1955) by "Willie Baron," a skit on the hard-boiled crime novel, is worth a wider audience than some of its travelling companions.

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lamented Corpun Educational Organisation and National Society for the Retention of Corporal Punishment in Schools. These discussions (with which the recent correspondence in *Penthouse* may be compared) and the sado-masochistic fantasy literature form one spectrum, whose subject-matter ranges by imperceptible degrees from domestic smacking, through scholastic caning, to the tortures which fill the pages of Sade, "Colonel Spanker," "Pauline Réage," and "Angela Pearson" (Diane Bataille). These writings, whatever their moral or literary value, are of undeniable scientific interest, and there are no grounds for not incorporating them, under the appropriate rubric, in the *B.M.* subject indexes.

There are far too many books which seem to have been relegated to the private case, or to remain there, by mistake or out of ignorance. *The Naked Lunch* (1959) and *The Soft Machine* (1961) by William Burroughs; *The Ticket That Exploded* (1962) by Burroughs and Michael Portman; *Fishes, Flowers and Fire as Elements and Deities in the Phallic Faiths & Worship of the Ancient Religions,* etc. (1890); James Hanley's *Boy* (1931); *Lady, Take Heed!* (1951 edn.) by "Cecil Barr" (Jack Kahane); *The Liberty of Britain Imperilled by Confessing Priests* [*c.* 1873]; *Imre: a memorandum* (1906) by "Xavier Mayne" (Edward I. P. Stevenson); *Bostonian Scintillations* (1787) by "Visibilis" and "Invisibilis." What any of these is doing in the class of tabooed books is an utter mystery.

All books at present in the private case should be entered in the subject indexes and should be available without formality, under proper supervision, to all adults who apply for them. This is the only practice consistent with the claims the museum makes for itself, and with the view expressed in the article on erotic literature in *Cassell's Encyclopaedia of Literature* (1953):

> In erotic and pornographic literature lies an almost untapped mine of information . . . dealing with the most intimate and secret activities of mankind. For here we have a picture of human sexual activity that is provided by nothing else except perhaps in the confessions of penitents, and of these, few ever see the light. Moreover, not only can we see the actualities and fantasies of the sexual life laid bare, but we can compare these manifestations as they are described by different peoples in different ages and under different social conditions. Thus the effect of historical circumstances and cultural changes may be traced, the relation of erotic customs and habits to contemporary events made clear, and

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some sort of rough measurement attempted whereby the imagination and sophistication of the age can be gauged.

These words were written by Dr. E. J. Dingwall, honorary curator of the British Museum's private case.

THERE IS at the *B.M.* a further class of uncatalogued books, about which the authorities are totally unhelpful. These are the suppressed books, whose shelf-marks begin with the cabbalistic letters *S.S.* Officially, readers may never see these books in any circumstances and not even their titles are revealed. However, the minutes of the trustees' standing committee are available up to 1915, and this and other sources show that the *S.S.* comprises the following:

(*1*) Books condemned by the courts for alleged obscenity. Many of these have recently been de-suppressed and reclassified in the private case or elsewhere, an interesting example being *Despised & Rejected* (1918) by "A. T. Fitzroy" (Rose Laure Allatini, afterwards Scott), the first open homosexual novel in English. The practice now seems to be to place such books in the private case without any intervening period in the *S.S.*

(*2*) Books which have been the subject of successful libel actions. Here again, much de-suppression has been carried out recently. For instance, the libellous *Life of Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.* (1888) by Charles R. Mackay and others—unaccountably never deleted from the general catalogue, so that one's application slip used to be returned marked "missing"—is now back at its old shelf-mark.

(*3*) Books which infringe copyright, such as Alice Corkran's *Miniatures* (1903).

(*4*) Books containing gross errors of fact. This caused the suppression, for example, of Colonel Sir Henry Knollys' *Life of General Sir Hope Grant* (1894).

(*5*) Credit indexes and other publications containing commercial secrets, produced confidentially for subscribers only, and deposited at the *B.M.* under the Copyright Act.

6. Publications containing police secrets. Thus *The Police Journal* is in the *S.S.* from its first issue (1928) onwards, the first eight years' issues having been suppressed retrospectively when the journal was restricted to members of the police force in 1936. Under this heading come certain books containing information on lock-picking, safe-breaking, and the manufacture of explosives.

(*7*) Publications suppressed for political reasons, on the request of the government or the police. Jefferson Jones' *The Fall of Tsingtau,* published in the U.S.A. in 1915, was suppressed for the duration of World War I because of its hostility to Britain's ally, Japan. This was done by the director of the *B.M.*—and approved by the trustees—at the direct request of the C.I.D.[7] *The Indian Sociologist* (1905–22) is in the *S.S.* because it was prohibited in India in 1907.

(*8*) Publications containing official secrets. For instance, seven volumes of the Curzon papers—the weekly reports written by Lord Curzon while Viceroy of India from 1898 to 1905—are in the *S.S.* (shelf-mark *S.S.Cup.7.a.1*) together with some twenty-five volumes of additional correspondence by Curzon relating to India.

(*9*) Publications revealing secrets of the freemasons.

(*10*) Certain blasphemous publications.

(*11*) Certain publications making revelations about the royal family: for instance, a copy of *The Modern Characters from Shakespear* (1778) with manuscript notes by King George III, bought for £70 in 1847 and locked up ever since.

(*12*) Certain publications which were crumbling to pieces and it was thought could be preserved, in pre-lamination days, only by putting them in the *S.S.* where nobody could get at them. I gather these include some guide-books and several erotica.

(*13*) A number of books presented to the *B.M.* on condition that their presence there should not, for a time, be revealed.

(*14*) At least one publication making a scurrilous personal attack on officers of the British Museum.

THERE IS A hand-list of suppressed books in the placer's office, and a copy of it used to be kept at the reading room inquiry desk. The research assistants there would consult it occasionally when readers asked about uncatalogued books. Last year I asked the then principal keeper, Mr. R. A. Wilson, if I might see the hand-list. He told me it was "not normally made available to readers," but added: "I do not wish to say that I will not let you see it in any circumstances." Would I give my reasons in more detail?

I did so, only to be told that "since the hand-

[7] I am grateful to Mr. Bentley Bridgewater, secretary of the British Museum, for having the relevant entry in the trustees' minutes (11 December 1915) transcribed for me; it appears in a volume which cannot be consulted directly, since most of it is not yet in the public domain.

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list of suppressed books is a tool for internal use I cannot permit a reader to have access to it." At roughly the same time—the beginning of June 1965—this tool was silently removed from the reading room for what, on my asking him why, the principal keeper described as "administrative reasons." From then onwards he found himself unable to state whether or not any particular book was on the hand-list, though hitherto any reader could have got this information merely by asking at the inquiry desk.

Some light was thrown on these "administrative reasons" in Mr. Sharp's letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* five months later. The hand-list, he wrote,

> was available to the Reading Room Staff in the first place to help readers with their enquiries, but after a time it was found to lead to requests which could not, because of insufficient evidence about the reasons for a book's "suppression," be met.

HERE ARE two remarkable admissions. First, the officials confess they simply do not know why some, at least, of the suppressed books were ever suppressed in the first place—and yet, in spite of the "insufficient evidence," they persist in denying to scholars even the mere titles. Secondly, they confess their policy on this question is governed by a desire to reduce the bother caused by the very few readers who occupy themselves with such matters. The "administrative reason" for the removal of the *S.S.* hand-list turns out to be that—it led to embarrassing requests.

Moreover, it is simply not true that no reader has ever been shown a copy of the hand-list. The late Sir Henry Thomas, principal keeper in 1946–47, gave a copy to the American bibliographer Mr. Gershon (originally, George Alexander) Legman, himself, not inappropriately, the author of a suppressed book on cunnilinctus,[8] written under the anagrammatic pseudonym "Roger-Maxe de La Glannège" and seized and destroyed by the U.S. police on publication in 1940. The gift was made on condition that it remained confidential. Mr. Wilson, challenged to deny this, replied that he could trace no information on the subject.

Nor is it true that readers are in no circumstances permitted to see *S.S.* books. I know two readers who have been working on the Curzon papers within the past two years. (One is now professor of diplomatic history at Simla university; he was given permission to see *S.S.* material thanks to an application on his behalf by St. Antony's College, Oxford, of which he was a fellow.)

It is not inconsistent with literary and scholarly freedom, but rather a condition of such freedom, that a libel be suppressed during the lifetime of the victim. No serious opponent of censorship would demand unrestricted access to the *S.S.* We are, however, entitled to demand that officials drop the pretence that there are no favoured readers, and that henceforth readers be all treated alike. If the *S.S.* hand-list were made accessible, whose interests would be threatened? The uncatalogued books at the *B.M.* are not the private property of a handful of bibliotaphs, but public property. However excellent the reasons for withholding some of them from their owners for the time being, there is no valid reason why the public should not know exactly what the *B.M.* is holding on their behalf. The *B.M.*'s attitude is unworthy of a great national library and totally inimical to scholarship and free inquiry. It is high time these curious pockets of censorship at Bloomsbury were done away with, so that Sir Frank Francis' fine words shall permit of no exceptions, and his "community in learning" be all-embracing.

[8] *Oragenitalism: an encyclopaedic outline of oral technique in genital excitation*, part I, "Cunnilinctus" ([New York], 1940). There is a photocopy in the private case.

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Foxe as Propagandist

By Frances Yates

ATROCITY STORIES do not make pleasant reading and when the atrocity described in detail—execution by burning alive—is repeated again and again as one victim after another comes to the stake the cumulative effect is ghastly.

Bent on assembling a Protestant martyrology which should leave a mark on Protestant religious history as powerful as the tales of the early Christian martyrs,[1] John Foxe spared his readers nothing. There is a painful similarity about accounts of death by burning; the process of gradual decomposition of the human body in the flames affords little variation, though sometimes the left arm may drop off first or on a windy day the last agony is protracted whilst the flames are blown away from the sufferer. In the dreadful case of Nicholas Ridley, a combination of windy weather with a badly-made pyre kept him alive for three-quarters of an hour calling constantly for "more fire." Foxe made sure that the image of "Bloody Mary" as perpetrator of these horrors should be indelibly stamped on the Protestant version of English history. For a devout Protestant reader in the Victorian age the stories of the martyrs belonged to a dark and distant past of wicked Papalism, infinitely remote from his contemporary world of progress. The modern reader may think the Marian martyrs relatively fortunate. Though brain-washing processes were attempted on them, these were not very efficiently or scientifically organised; nor were they tortured and executed in secrecy. Each martyr was the central actor in a public drama and was allowed to address moving speeches to the onlookers. He could feel to the last at the centre of an eternal conflict between the conviction for which he was dying and its opponents, and know to the last that his impressive death was having an influence. Whether or not Latimer actually said these words as the faggot was being kindled at his feet—"Be of good comfort, Mr. Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as I trust shall never be put out"—this was the kind of thing that a Marian martyr was expected and allowed to say. No doubt learning from the mistakes of his unfortunate wife, Philip II later forbade public executions in his persecutions of Protestants in the Low Countries.

The lurid reputation of Foxe the martyrologist has obscured Foxe the historian. The martyr stories form only a relatively small part of an immensely long historical work, constantly added to in successive editions (the main edition was in 1570). Foxe himself did not call his book the "Book of Martyrs"; he called it *Acts and Monuments* or *Ecclesiastical History*. Beginning about the year 1000 and ending with the accession of Queen Elizabeth I, Foxe's vast work presents a view of the meaning of history as a whole, worked out with a passion equal to that of Eusebius or Marx. Like all universal historians of a doctrinaire type, Foxe sees history as a conflict between opposed good and evil forces. In Foxist history, these forces are, not proletarians and capitalists, but Empire and Papacy, understanding Empire in the sense of Holy Roman Empire with its spiritual claims, with which are associated the imperial rights of sacred monarchs, like the Tudors, to reform the Church. When evil is dominant, there are martyrs, as in the reign of Mary when the wicked Papal power attempted a come-back. When good is dominant, as in the reign of Elizabeth, the sacred monarch terminates the reign of evil and brings back the true religion. Foxist history is propagandist history for the Tudor reform of the Church, not only warning against the Church of Rome through its scarifying stories of Romanist persecutions, but also through its whole interpretation of history in terms of Monarchy versus Papacy.

Books like these aim at making history; and

[1] *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. Edited and abridged by G. A. WILLIAMSON. Secker & Warburg, 50s.

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Foxist history, like Marxist history, had an effect on the actual making of history.

FOXE'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS, his passionate adherence to the more extreme attitudes of the Reformation, are tied in with his imperialist and monarchical convictions. He believed that the purity of the early Church was preserved when Christian emperors, from Constantine onwards, guided its councils, and that impurity and corruption set in when the Bishops of Rome, usurping the sacred imperial power, took the lead. His long history of the oppression of Emperors by Popes is illustrated with a series of woodcuts representing Popes insulting Emperors, as Hildebrand did at Canossa, or Popes treading on the necks of Emperors. This theme becomes related to English history through regarding English monarchs as representatives of the sacred imperial power, and he tells and shows in his illustrations the stories of a papal emissary poisoning King John or of Henry III being made to kiss the knee of the Pope's legate. Foxist history leads up inevitably to its climax in the break with Rome under the Tudors; a triumphant illustration shows Henry VIII trampling on the Pope as he throws off the papal "usurped power." The triumph of the pure reformed Church is interrupted by the Papalist reaction under Mary, blackly underlined by the stories of the martyrs, but with the advent of Elizabeth history is consummated. Like a new Constantine she initiates a new golden age of pure religion, puts an end to the martyrdoms, and in her character of sacred imperial ruler she finally tramples on the Pope and rids England forever (Foxe hopes) of papal interference.

FOXE'S BOOK is a perfect example of propagandist history, using a wealth of miscellaneous documentation always with single-eyed determination to weave all the strands into patterns which suit his argument. And his arguments fitted perfectly with those by which the Royal Supremacy over both Church and State—the keystone of the whole Tudor position—was justified. The arguments for the Supremacy were related to the position of emperors in the Councils of the Church, and the imperial title of English kings to complete sovereignty within their dominions had long been associated with the struggles of the English crown against papal interference. Imperialist theory was of the greatest importance in England in buttressing the break with the Papacy. John Jewel's *Apology for the Church of England* (1560) is written from the same kind of Protestant-Imperialist position as Foxe's book and uses

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the same kind of historical examples of Popes oppressing Emperors, followed up by claims of the sacred imperial rights of the English crown as justifying the reform of the Church by the monarch. It was as holder of the sacred imperial power that the monarch claimed the right to throw off papal suzerainty and establish a national church. As one seventeenth-century writer puts it, "the Britannic Church was withdrawn from the Roman patriarchate by the Imperial authority of Henry VIII."

Seen in the context of the religious-imperial drapery with which the Royal Supremacy was invested, Foxe's unrolling of the scrolls of universal history on the themes of Papacy and Empire, with the former as the villain of the piece, is obviously a necessary and logical preliminary to his treatment of recent English history. The Pope's "usurped power" was brought in again by Mary; hence the sufferings of the martyrs witnessing to the true Church. The pictures of martyrs burning at the stake with which the book is decorated are not more important than the pictures of Emperors trodden on by Popes until the latest Tudor inheritor of the imperial power finally kicks the Pope out of England. The two themes are interrelated. The martyrs are like the early Christians rescued by the Emperor Constantine; or rather they are the new Reformed early Christians rescued by the Sacred Empress, Elizabeth.

Those who have become impatient with Foxe's book as a vast confused mass of ill-digested material, the only readable parts of which are the spicy martyr stories, are those who have not found the thread through his labyrinth, which is the "imperial theme." With considerable skill, Foxe combined universal history of the Church on the model of Eusebius with the traditions of mediaeval imperialist theory to form a historical justification for the Tudor imperial and monarchical reform.

THOUGH FOXE'S USE of Eusebius as a model is well known, the influence on him of medieval imperialist writers, not excluding Dante, has received far less emphasis. Foxe's quotations from Dante's *Monarchia* and from the *Divine Comedy* are one of the few evidences of the influence of Dante in sixteenth-century England. They are taken from a secondary source and they present Dante as one of a cloud of witnesses who have attacked the wickedness of the Papacy and have demanded a Reformation. Foxe sees Dante as an imperialist reformer, a believer in the traditions of sacred empire, who appeals to emperors to reform the Church. This is of course not untrue but to twist Dante into a Protestant imperial reformer, a witness who can be called upon from afar to justify the Tudor reform, is of course a distortion, though one to which Foxe could have been led in the Protestant circles which he frequented in Bâle during his exile in the reign of Mary.

Dante's *Monarchia* was first printed at Bâle in 1559 by a Protestant printer as one of a collection of tracts on the rights and spiritual claims of the Empire. Protestant use of Dantesque imperialism against the Papacy was thus no new thing; when used by Foxe it introduces what one may almost call a Ghibelline atmosphere into his religious-imperial theme.

FOXIST HISTORY is really entirely medieval in spirit, revolving around the twin pillars of Papacy and Empire, like the old chronicles. The fact that in the new Protestant interpretation, Empire is pitted against Papacy does not alter the fundamentally medieval character of Foxe's approach to the theory of history. He is quite untouched by the new critical schools of historical writing which had arisen in Florence and which broke completely with the old notions of Empire and its periodic golden ages. Foxe is no Machiavellian realist; he is an old-fashioned chronicler. Though he heaps together great masses of documents, these are not critically investigated but drawn into the great stream of Papacy and Empire patterns in their Protestant and English interpretation. His history of the kings of England is in straightforward chronicle tradition, as he draws English history into the over-riding pattern of the Protestant imperial theme.

He has to the full the chronicler's gift of vivid narrative which is shown most strikingly in his "stories" of recent history, the stories of the martyrs, the material for which he drew from informants but wrote up in a dramatic and striking manner. His readers are unable to forget these terrible stories which go on, one after another, through the last part of the book. With careful attention to convincing detail and with innumerable touches calculated to arouse emotional sympathy, Foxe builds up story after story, until the reader, tried like a martyr almost beyond endurance, welcomes with sighs of relief the ending of the tyranny of the papists with the advent of the imperial and Protestant Virgin Queen. Though the "Book of Martyrs" is only a small part of the universal history of the *Acts and Monuments* it is the culmination of its whole theme, telling of the last and worst outburst of Antichrist in England. It was the combination of Foxe's power of building up a theory of universal history with his power of emotional appeal in these dreadful stories which made his book so utterly convincing in the tradition of English Protestantism.

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It is impossible to exaggerate the influence of this book. Accepted from the start as the official history, telling every Englishman what he should know about the past of his country in relation to its present, it was placed in churches—chained Foxes can still be seen in some out-of-the-way village churches—to be read by the faithful, together with the Bible. To the Elizabethan reader it was not the diffuse, dull, over-lengthy compilation which it may seem to the modern reader. It was a red-hot presentation of sensational recent history. It told stories about the Queen and her strange family —her father and his many wives, her brother, her "bloody" sister. It related the present state of England to the history of its former kings right back to King Lucius, the mythical first Christian king of England. And it presented the history of English monarchs in close connection with religious history, emphasising the tremendous spiritual responsibility of kings. Every Elizabethan knew of or had read this book; Francis Drake is said to have taken it with him on his voyage round the world. It did its work, for there can be little doubt that Foxe contributed very materially to the success and stability of the Elizabethan settlement, that his themes became part of the warp and woof of contemporary thinking, and his history the prism through which many Elizabethans saw the history of their country.

FOXIST HISTORY could serve to buttress the symbolism through which Elizabeth was presented in pageantry, art, and poetry throughout her reign. One of the chief and most deeply rooted of the Elizabeth symbols was that of the righteous virgin Astraea, who in the classical legend is said to return to earth when the golden age is established. Associated as it was with Roman imperialist propaganda, the symbol of the Virgin Astraea returning to earth with the establishment by Elizabeth of the imperial reform was particularly suited to the Virgin Queen in all her aspects, both as the Empress-Monarch and as the Monarch who was the head of a reformed Church. Though the symbol was used of Elizabeth very early in her reign, the Foxist official history which leads up to Elizabeth all through the ages as the Monarch of a new golden age, the female Constantine who ends the persecutions of the Church and establishes pure religion, gave a strong sanction to the symbol. It was the Protestant version of imperialist history, of which Foxe's book was the most powerful though not the only account, which made possible the creation of a national epic on Virgilian lines centred on the figure of the Imperial Virgin. *The Faerie Queene* is a poetic statement of the Tudor religious position corresponding to the historical statement made by Foxe. Standing, perhaps, in a church, Spenser might have turned the pages of the *Acts and Monuments*. In that huge book he (and any Elizabethan) could have scanned the immense wealth of documentation through which Foxe supports his view of history, drawing into its service every writer who had maintained imperialist theory and every critic of the Papacy. Troubadours and philosophers, poets and humanists, all could be made to witness (often through very misleading quotation) to the wickedness of the Church of Rome and therefore by implication to the righteousness of the Just Virgin of the imperial reform. There among many other great names was the name of Dante, the distorted Dante of Protestant imperialism. The Spenserian antithesis between Una, the One of sacred empire, and Duessa, the false Whore, may owe something to the Protestant imperialist distortion of Dante to be found in Foxe, though not in him alone.

Long after Foxist history had played its momentous part in justifying the Tudor reform and in building up the Elizabeth symbolism, his book continued to sway generation after generation of English readers, with its terrible warnings of what might be the result of a return of Popery under some new "bloody" ruler, with its impressive history of the universal Church in terms of Monarchy versus Papacy. This monumental universal history in the English language witnessed, like the Bible in English, to the validity of the English Protestant and monarchical reformation. Foxe and the Bible, the Bible and Foxe, these were the pillars of his belief for Bunyan and countless others. The history of our own times has shown us numerous examples of the power of propagandist history in establishing and maintaining a régime. Foxist history is a notable example of such operative history. Was it Foxe who made a Protestant succession to the throne an inevitable part of English history? Was Foxe still working even in the Protestant undertones of Victorian imperialism? Such questions have not yet been fully explored.

I PROFOUNDLY DISAGREE with J. F. Mozley who has said of Foxe's book that its first readers were interested only in the martyr stories, "not because it told of Constantine or Barbarossa or Hildebrand" or for its English translations of extracts from a mass of politico-religious literature. This comment misses the object of the work, underrates the appetite of the Elizabethan age for controver-

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sial religious literature, and the need of that age to take refuge in a powerful symbol to justify its break with the rest of Christendom—a symbol which Foxe and others provided in the idea of sacred empire. Nevertheless it seems that as time went on the "Book of Martyrs" did become gradually divorced from its context in the universal history. Wesley made an abridgement, concentrating on the martyrs and explaining that he was omitting much "trash which the honest and injudicious writer had put together." The eviction of Foxe the historiographer by Foxe the martyrologist was thus already beginning. Nevertheless the main Victorian editions include everything and run into eight volumes. One should not feel too sure that Victorians of the type of the parents of Edmund Gosse were not still tracing the history of Antichrist in Foxist terms.

OF COURSE, Catholic historians and propagandists had from the start entered the field against the imperialist arguments. Nicholas Sanders' *Rock of the Church* presents succinctly the opposite side of the medal. He refutes the imperialist theory of the rights of emperors in the Councils of the Church; execrates the setting up of a temporal prince above the lawful successor of St. Peter as the very mark and badge of Antichrist; deplores with horror the display of the Royal Arms in English churches in the place of religious statues (the Royal Arms, marking the Supremacy, have been taken out of the churches, like the Foxes). The violence of Robert Parsons' attack on Foxe's book witnesses indirectly to its influence. The Catholic undercurrent of criticism was always present but it was probably not until the 19th century that the Protestant version of English history began to be seriously weakened under the influence of the Oxford movement and the Gothic revival. In this atmosphere, Foxe appeared as an old-fashioned tyrant. Heavy attacks on his veracity were made by Maitland and others, and his book, once so all important, disappeared and was forgotten. Reading Foxe today brings home how remote from contemporary literature are the presuppositions of Foxism, how completely he has been reversed. Compare the Thomas Becket of Foxe, traitor to his lawful monarch in supporting the interference of Antichrist, with the Becket of T. S. Eliot. Or compare our image of Thomas More with Foxe's More, an intolerant persecutor of the faithful, rightly punished for his cruelty by his own cruel death, exhibiting his frivolity by dying with a jest on his lips.

> John Fisher Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More, in King Henry's time, after they had brought Frith, Bayfield, and Bainham, and divers

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> others to their death, what great reward won they thereby with Almighty God? Did not the sword of God's vengeance light upon their own necks shortly after, and they themselves made a public spectacle at the Tower Hill of bloody death, which before had no compassion of the lives of others?

Strange indeed are the whirligigs, not only of time, but of the presentations of times. Foxist history witnesses not only to the immense power of propagandist history but also to its transience, how it is cast aside and forgotten in the reaction.

IT IS ONLY IN comparatively recent times that attempts have been made to examine the importance of Foxe's book from a purely historical point of view, divested of the old partisanship. J. F. Mozley (*John Foxe and his Book*, 1940) made out a case for Foxe's reliability in the use of documents, against Maitland's criticisms that he invented martyrs and exaggerated the persecutions. By dismissing the universal history as unimportant, Mozley tends to continue the tradition of isolating the "Book of Martyrs" from its context. In my article on "Queen Elizabeth as Astraea" (*Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1947) I examined the Foxist imperialist history in relation to the Elizabeth symbolism. The most important recent study is that by William Haller (*Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation*, 1963); though the martyrologist is prominent in this book, Haller does not neglect the historiographer and examines carefully Foxe's use of Eusebius and other historical materials. He omits, however, to discuss Foxe and the medieval imperialist writers, and, though well aware that Foxe treats English history in relation to the spiritual responsibility of kings, he does not see the connection of this with the imperialist theory underlying the Royal Supremacy. Nevertheless, Haller's book marks a definite advance in serious historical treatment, and it appears to have been a review of it in which Philip Toynbee called for a new abridged edition of Foxe which inspired G. A. Williamson to undertake the editing and arrangement of a volume of selections.

No one but a "dedicated scholar," thinks Mr. Williamson, would read through the whole of Foxe's book and no publisher would risk reprinting it. Former abridgements were not made, he says, to save the reader's time but to make propaganda for the Protestant cause by concentrating on the martyrs. Yet this new abridgement, without having the excuse of fanatical belief in the Protestant cause—Mr. Williamson seems pleasantly liberal in his views—also concentrates mainly on the martyrdom stories. What it presents is *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, not the *Acts and Monuments*. Mr. Williamson has omitted the whole of the first fifth of the book, accounts of events abroad, documents, letters, in short all the mass of material ont of which the universal history was built up, and has made selections from the "stories," which according to him form the meat of the book. When the martyrdom stories are taken out of their context in the universal history they become merely horror stories. Nor does Mr. Williamson really attempt in his introduction to reconstruct for the reader the plan of the work as a whole. Though he mentions that Foxe, like Eusebius, is writing a universal history, he thinks that Foxe's faults as a writer stem from excessive adherence to Eusebius, and he deplores the "blind optimism" of Eusebius and Foxe in believing that a golden age had arrived, in the one case with Constantine, in the other case with Elizabeth. This misses the whole point of Foxe's book as religious imperialist propaganda (which was also missed by Haller). One might as well regret the blind optimism of Virgil in believing in an Augustan golden age. Nor is this the only glimpse of lack of understanding of Foxe's work and its relation to its times which this introduction affords, suggesting that the writer was not well qualified to make an intelligent abridgement. I agree that this would be extremely difficult and that no abridgement can be entirely satisfactory. What is needed is a full reprint, probably of the 1570 edition, with detailed introduction and notes, a vast task needing both dedicated scholars and dedicated publishers. But until it is done an immense fund of most essential information about the Elizabethan age and how it used historical materials will remain inaccessible.

NEVERTHELESS WE MUST be thankful for what Mr. Williamson has given us, and from his own rather limited point of view he has made quite a neat job of the abridgement. Regarding the meat of the book as narrative history, not theoretical history, he has put the stories together in consecutive narrative form. Beginning with Wickliffe and the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, he passes to the Lollards and the reigns of Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VI, Edward IV, Richard III and Henry VII. Then comes the Reformation and the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI. Then the reversal to Rome and the reign of terror under Mary which takes up the greater part of the book. Mr. Williamson has carefully retained Foxe's own language, making only some omissions and regularisations of spelling, and has provided a useful glossary in which the reader is instructed to look up, not only unfamiliar words, but

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familiar words used in an unusual sense. He has thus made available in convenient and readable form Foxe's History of England from Edward III to the accession of Elizabeth, with its specialised slant on religious history.

THE ABRIDGEMENT has the advantage of including the whole of Foxe's treatment of Henry VIII and his family, which required delicate handling in relation to his theme. Henry's first marriage to his brother's widow was illegal, arranged by immoral Papists. Seized with qualms of conscience, the pious king sought a second marriage: Anne Boleyn has to be written up as sympathetic to the Protestant cause, since she both precipitated the Reformation and was the mother of Elizabeth. Foxe is a little evasive about her death but succeeds in a general way in leaving an impression on the reader that Henry's wives might have lost their heads through urging advance in a more Protestant direction on an irritable spouse. Henry is a slightly ambiguous figure, for though it was he who first broke with Antichrist and laid firm hold for the first time on the Two Swords (of both the spiritual and temporal power), his Reformation was not sufficiently advanced for Foxe's Puritan taste. The boy king, Edward VI, is fully one of the elect, marked out for an early death by his sanctity. When the dread doings of his eldest sister have been recounted, Foxe gives what Haller has called a not unsympathetic account of her personal tragedy, how she was neglected by the husband she loved, could not have the child she longed for, lost Calais. Foxe's personal impression of Mary has passed into history, yet sympathetic is hardly the word for it. Her misfortunes were the retribution always meted out by an angry Deity upon those who persecute the elect. Meanwhile her young sister was enduring sufferings which were but a preparation for her great destiny. Almost herself a Marian martyr but delivered in time by Providence out of the very jaws of Antichrist, the young Elizabeth moves impressively through Foxe's concluding pages, the dignity of her conduct under her sister's oppression enhanced by telling pathetic touches (the child who was forbidden to bring her flowers). This is one of the best pieces of writing in the book, and Foxe could write. The reader will be grateful to Mr. Williamson for giving it to him entire. Imperial panegyric, with its underlying emotional rhythm, has not been unproductive of great literature, witness the *Aeneid*. Foxe leaves Elizabeth at the beginning of her golden age; her poets would continue the imperial theme.

Mr. Williamson's abridgement will call attention to Foxe and to the power of his

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writing. Probably he is right that only a selection from the more obviously readable portions of the book would have found a publisher, and one cannot regret that at least some Foxe has been made available, for the earlier editions and abridgements are all out of print and hard to come by. Nevertheless his inadequate introduction is hardly a step in the right direction for fuller understanding of this tremendous work. And the very neatness of his solution of the problem of abridgement warns of its superficiality, for without the universal context the reader cannot recognise in this straight narrative the working out of the sacred imperial theme in terms of English monarchy.

Sacred Monarchy was the most operative politico-religious idea of the 16th century, and it was John Foxe who provided a historical justification for the peculiar form of it which underlay the Tudor assumption of supreme authority in both Church and State.

Europa Svevo

Italo Svevo, the Man and the Writer. By P. N. Furbank. *Secker & Warburg,* 45s.

Italo Svevo was a name invented to tidy up the cultural and national confusion of Ettore Schmitz's background, German-Italian-Jewish, and means "Italus the Swabian," *i.e.,* Italian-Swabian. The eyes are bright, soft, and solemn—those of a clown. The moustache is carefully bourgeois, that of a businessman. The clothes and stance and whole expression, in the photograph of Svevo with his friend Veruda, a flamboyantly handsome painter, are those of one who is deliberately unflamboyant, anti-bohemian, self-deprecating, even faintly embarrassed to find himself photographed in such dashing, noticeable company. An artist who looks and behaves totally unlike most people's idea of an artist is always rather more intriguing than what looks the genuine article; and the greater his work, of course, the more intriguing the discrepancy between what he seems and what he does, the more it seems like ironic justice that Veruda (say), for all his airs, is forgotten, and Svevo, for all his lack of them, remembered.

Lack of artistic side, a total artistic unpretentiousness and even lack of obvious professionalism, was clearly one of Svevo's most endearing characteristics. Not only did he fail to look, dress, sound, talk shop and in general seem like a writer, or rather like most people's idea of a writer, he even failed, as it were, to write like a writer. And that in Italy, where literariness is an occupational hazard of anyone literate. Svevo's style is a non-style, flavourless, transparent, anonymous—and that in the d'Annunzian years when rhetoric was everything, and the face of fiction practically invisible under its purple patches. Some (very few) modern Italian writers have been simple in syntax—Cassola, for instance. But Svevo's style is neither simple nor complex, it is just something you have to peer through, to find Svevo and all his truth and richness beyond. No writer, surely, has been great so much *in spite* of his language. It puts out most of one's notions about form-and-content, about *"le style c'est l'homme"* and the rest of it. As P. N. Furbank says:

> His language is a very curious phenomenon. He didn't write in dialect, though dialect constructions turn up here and there.... What Svevo wrote was a kind of "business" Italian, almost an esperanto—a bastard and graceless language totally without poetry or resonance.... One has the impression... that Svevo was constitutionally insensitive to the formal qualities of prose, as he was to all poetry.... Certainly he sometimes wrote sentences of extraordinary clumsiness, a sort of laboriousness and roundaboutness which reveals not so much carelessness as a genuine incapacity for handling syntax. Moreover he often made definite mistakes in grammar and used impossible archaisms (rather as Thomas Hardy did), and he constantly committed elementary howlers, such as using the wrong preposition before an infinitive.

But Beryl de Zoete, who translated *Senilità* and *La coscienza di Zeno,* and Archibald Colquhoun, who thirty years later translated *Una vita,* ironed out much of the noticeable gracelessness, and put Svevo into an English that was suitably plain. Few major writers can have lost as little in translation. This makes it all the odder that, although his two great novels, *Senilità* and *Zeno,* appeared in this country in, respectively, 1932 and 1930, Svevo is still little known here, and certainly little regarded except as a literary curiosity—one of Joyce's polyglot friends, whom he taught English in Trieste and used, to some extent, in Leopold Bloom.

But he is lucky, at last, in his new British sponsor (as he was lucky in the championship of Joyce, who encouraged him to write and publish after twenty-five years' silence, and, by urging his French friends to read and appreciate *Zeno* when it appeared, gave him a brief spurt of fame and fuss at the end of a lifetime of literary neglect). For Mr. Furbank is not just an admirable explorer and explainer

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of the complex world of Svevo's mind, a world at once ingenuous and subtle, where the balance Svevo loved is achieved between the most disparate attitudes and ideas; he is also the ideal man to balance and marry the man and his work, his life and his art. He has, too, an emotional affinity with his subject that keeps him safe from literariness himself, a vigorous lack of verbiage and vogue attitudes that allows him to explore minutely and elaborately, yet to set down his conclusions in what seem disarmingly straightforward terms: a lack of cant, in fact, that Svevo himself would have approved.

THE LIFE ITSELF was memorable, like Svevo's own personality, for its bourgeois qualities: busyness, respectability, success. Towards the end of his life it amused Svevo to hear himself called a tycoon or a millionaire, he who was merely a middling employee of his in-laws, large-scale manufacturers of submarine paint. His wife, Livia Veneziani (Joyce borrowed her name and her marvellous hair for Anna Livia Plurabelle), was a cousin: she brought Svevo a glass of marsala as he watched his mother dying, and, in the hollow left by his mother's death, it touched him into love and a proposal of marriage a month later. Early in the century he was sent to England to start a branch of the family firm there (an English admiral in Trieste had suggested it), and in his yearly visits to England he suggests more than elsewhere (since there he was, of course, more at a disadvantage than at home) one of his own heroes. He didn't shave enough or wear smart enough collars, he failed to understand the niceties of social life and the Plymouth dockers yelled with laughter at his English. Still, he came to like it in the end, supported Charlton Athletic, formed a chamber trio with the local postmistress and her brother, and even wrote to Livia in English: "We took a Horse-Bus and went to Hide-Park to the Preachers-Corner where I have like alwais my little lesson of Cockney." He died after a car crash in 1928, with his few famous years behind him, before Italian fascism had turned anti-semitic; but Livia, though only a quarter Jewish by family and a pious Catholic by religion, spent the war years in terror of arrest. Ironically, she lost two grandsons on the Russian front and a third in the Trieste uprising of May 1945; and while the Villa Veneziani was flattened by American bombs, the bust of Svevo in Trieste was overturned by the fascists, who scrawled "Bronze for the fatherland" over it. In fact, they got it all ways.

Svevo's Jewishness, indeed, seems to gain retrospective weight when you consider what, but for the car crash, he might have survived into. It was not explicit in his novels; it was not, it seems, even generally known, for an article in *Horizon* during the war merely remarks that: "There may have been a Jewish strain in the family." Yet Svevo has been criticised for Jewish anti-semitism (of the Weininger sort) in his whole concept of character and in the attitude of his "hopeless" heroes towards the supposedly "Aryan" others—Belli in *Senilità*, for instance. What counts, though, as Mr. Furbank points out, isn't the characters themselves (who in any case are treated with elaborate irony, with all sorts of reversals of fortune and position; and Guido, the "healthiest," most "Aryan" of the lot, Zeno's hated rival, gets the name of Speier), but the attitude towards them, Svevo's tone. "The sanity," as he remarks, "lies in the tone."

> Though his writing is mostly about disease [he goes on to say] Svevo was an extremely sane writer.... One sees a reason why he should have been attracted to the author of *Ulysses*. For both Joyce and he not only celebrated the bourgeois as hero, they cheerfully identified themselves with him. They were the first to do this.... It had its compensations for Svevo that he was never, at least until the very end of his life, allowed to live the professional writer's life. It meant he was able to study the writer's vanity, which he was intensely subject to, from a position of genuine detachment.... He was sincerely convinced, and not merely out of pique, of the harmfulness of pretentiousness. He disliked all exaggeration. He respected balance, even the ludicrous balance that the heroes of *Senilità* and *Zeno* attain, and regarded disease itself as a supreme case of exaggeration.

"Health," "sanity," "gaiety": these words keep recurring in the second half of Mr. Furbank's book, which deals with Svevo's writings —his three novels, short stories, fables, some plays. They were anything but the words chosen by his contemporaries. "Italo Svevo has no exceptional talent, a restricted vision and a slipshod style," the *Times Literary Supplement* wrote in 1926. *Zeno,* it went on to say, was "nothing more than the voluble communications of a confessedly futile and despicable person whose little desires and weaknesses are for him the centre of his interest.... In this interminable *bavardage,*" it continued, "nothing is left out, no passage has more importance than another. It is not dramatic, it has no organic form, it presents no profound view of humanity, nor has it the passion of good satire." At home, though he had his champions, the general weight of critical opinion was similarly against him: his very qualities of denseness and seriousness, his determination to find the meaning, the essence, rather than the trappings,

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the accidents, worked against him. And, in an instinctive way that seems almost miraculous, certainly uncanny, he was ahead of his contemporaries in achievement, while technically and practically he seemed far behind them. They tried to explain what he achieved in rational terms, by thinking up influences and sticking on labels: mainly Proust and Joyce. But Svevo was in fact a man who thought, felt and lived outside most of the intellectual life of his time, who reached his particular artistic point by other routes, on his own. "Without having read Proust, and with only a very partial knowledge of *Ulysses*—having, in fact, been out of touch with any literary fashion later than Bourget or Zola—Svevo discovered for himself the new 'totalist' conception of fiction," Mr. Furbank writes, "and wrote the first 'modern' novel in Italian. It was to represent the totality of a man's existence, the whole 'Consciousness of Zeno.'" "He was never a good literary talker," he says elsewhere, "or indeed, in the usual sense, an intellectual at all." His friend Roberto Bazlen said that his naïvety in literary and artistic matters was "disastrous—no taste, no sense of form, ignorance of every sort of aesthetic problem. No ear, no sense of rhythm, stone-deaf to poetry—practically speaking at the level of the Bourget/Fogazzaro era." The impression, when he talked about books, was of his "staggering (seeming) primitiveness."

And if his heroes were more modern than seemed comfortable to his contemporaries (in particular to his risingly fascist contemporaries), his dreams were prophetic. Mr. Furbank doesn't quote it, but one of Svevo's fables ends with an all too recognisable bang:

> A man, made like all other men of flesh and blood will, in the quiet of a room, invent an explosion of such potency that all the explosives in existence will seem like harmless toys beside it. And another man, made in his image and in the image of all the rest, but a little weaker than them, will steal that explosive and crawl to the centre of the earth with it, and place it just where he calculates it would have the maximum effect. There will be a tremendous explosion, but none will hear it and the earth will return to its nebulous state and go wandering through the sky, free at last from parasites and disease.

The present has caught up with Svevo, at long last.

Isabel Quigly

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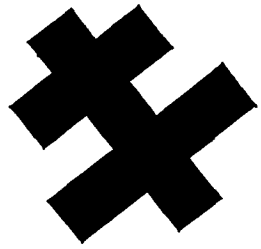

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Little Brief Authority

The Habit of Authority: Paternalism in British History. By A. P. THORNTON. *Allen & Unwin*, 45s.

IT IS EASY to see how Professor Thornton moved from his brilliant discussion of the British "imperial idea" to a book on the "habit of authority" as displayed in the British state. Authoritative leadership is as necessary for any type of purposive action on the part of the 20th-century state it was on the part of its predecessors for the founding of an empire. The difficulty is for any nexus of politicians to establish their credentials sufficiently to be taken on trust by those whom it is their task to lead. Under the Fourth French Republic, for example, it was not ability nor even intelligent policies that were lacking. What was wanting was a relationship between governed and governors that gave to the latter enough freedom of action to weather the storms of 20th-century life and the intrigues of French politics. The nearest that France got to authoritative leadership in the years between 1945 and 1958 was M. Pinay—a "little" man if ever there was one, but a little man trusted by the electorate. The more dynamic concept of a Mendès-France came to grief on the resistance it created, like a canal boat brought to a halt by its own bow wave.

In Great Britain the problem was simplified during the 19th century by the existence of a governing class, Matthew Arnold's "barbarians." Professor Thornton traces their relationship to the mass of the British people from the Norman barons ruling over Saxon peasants, but there is no need to take the habit of authority back quite so far. The ascendancy established by the English aristocracy during the 17th and 18th centuries led by about 1850 to the adoption of its manners and mode of education by the professional classes. Aristocratic habits of authority therefore went unchallenged by the only section of society that could have challenged them. The division into "upper" and "lower" classes became a feature of the British landscape.

This arrangement had some points. Professor Thornton quotes such opposite opinions as Lecky and Harold Laski to the effect that the "gentlemen of England" had honesty and disinterestedness to their credit. The British civil service and British administrators in India and elsewhere may often have been felt by the administered to be cold and arrogant, but their standards were usually considerably higher than those of officials in other countries, and India got the benefit of reformers like Bentham and James Mill when Britain did not. The liberal and humane concept of the state that permeates British government is an aristocratic concept evolved from the code of behaviour of equal individuals. Tom Paine might remark that aristocrats begin their career of dominion in the nursery, by trampling on the faces of their younger brothers and sisters, but it would be equally true to say that the first person to be tolerant of anyone was a duke being tolerant of another duke—because he was his equal. The Whig contribution to British political life was to associate with the idea of democracy concepts of personal liberty which were by no means natural accompaniments of it.

The paradox of an authoritarian state carrying out the will of the sovereign people in a way that rode rough-shod over M. *X* or M. *Y* produced in France a split between government and people that was partly responsible for the rapid attrition of the Fourth Republic. In Britain the state has always handled individuals with far greater regard for their status, and one result is that there has traditionally been little hostility to government as such. Both the association of the "upper" classes with government and the liberal view they took of its function combined to create a far higher degree of assent to its actions than was the case in countries with a more authoritarian view of the

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state. Arnold's appeal for more active state intervention to further the spreading of "sweetness and light" must have astonished a Taine or a Renan desirous of cutting down to size the centralising administrative machine inherited from the *ancien régime,* the Jacobins, and Napoleon.

Up to a point, therefore, the authoritative leadership provided by aristocracy and professional classes during the 19th century was beneficial to Britain. It was also beneficial to Britain's colonies which might have fared worse if a certain ideal of disinterestedness had not prevailed among those whose job it was to rule them. "I for one feel no shame," wrote Fitz-James Stephen, "when I think of the great competitive examination which has lasted for just one hundred years and whose first paper was set on the field of Plassy and the last (for the present) beneath the walls of Delhi and Lucknow...." The British empire (acquired, according to Seeley, in a fit of absence of mind) had some of the virtues, as well as the vices, of paternalism, and it remains to be seen whether countries landed with filling a power vacuum in the late 20th century will be able to afford the courage of such good intentions.

But the system by which British political life was based on leadership exercised by an upper class began to break down with the loss of that class's own self-confidence and a marked diminution in its ability to govern. It was a condition of the continued preponderance of the upper class that they should know their business (which, unlike that of their American equivalents, was not business). During the 19th century, on the whole, they had known it, coming to terms even with such unfamiliar phenomena as the industrial revolution, trade unions, and the beginnings of social services. It was after 1914 that things began to go wrong. "Long accustomed to leadership, it was in a state of resentment that the British people had endured its absence since 1919." As Professor Thornton points out, the first blow against the assumption that the upper classes were good at their job was struck in the quagmires of the Somme when it became apparent that, whatever the personal qualities of Haig (so persistently paraded before us these days), British military leadership was rigid and uninspired. Between the wars that impression was reinforced. Useful reforms may have been carried out between 1918 and 1938, but they were lost in a series of highly coloured failures—failure to meet the slump, failure to forestall Hitler and Mussolini. After the national consensus of 1939–45 under a leadership as traditional as that of Churchill, the post-war period once again

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LUKASZ HIRSZOWICZ

Lecturer in Modern History, Oriental Faculty, University of Warsaw

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saw a failure to deal with the country's basic problems on the part of those whose claim was that they were peculiarly suited for government by training and experience.

This has not been entirely a party question. Though the most inexplicable episode in post-war British history remains the Conservative failure, after the party's decisive victory in 1959, to introduce reforms, which Mr. Harold Macmillan and his colleagues certainly realised were necessary, the British *élite* as a whole has, since 1945, given an impression of a loss of nerve. Or perhaps it was that they had grown accustomed to the sun never setting on their good intentions; the dismantling of empire and dwindling of British power in the world left them at something of a loose end, a prey to nostalgia and with reflexes conditioned to situations that had ceased to exist. The unconscious longing to get back to the war years—which is the main theme of a book such as John Le Carré's *The Looking-Glass War* and is also exhibited in the official pleasure taken in the British "role" east of Suez—is one symptom of this grasping at inappropriate stock responses. It would be exaggerating to say that British governments since 1945 have been particularly successful in coping with a new national situation, though it may be that it would be unreasonable to expect such success when the very existence of the problem only began to be grasped at the end of the 'fifties. In fact, the first decisive step to settle Britain's future was Mr. Macmillan's decision to enter the European Economic Community.

FOR NEARLY FIFTY YEARS NOW the traditional upper-class sources of recruitment of ministers and high officials have been discredited by failure to anticipate problems or adapt to them in time. The machinery of government has appeared increasingly outdated and the leadership at the top lacking in decision and wisdom. One result of this has been that British educated opinion, from according a perhaps exaggerated respect to the authority of the state and those who represent it, has now swung to a persistent questioning of the necessity for authority at all. The *frondeur* has been a typical enough figure of the late 'fifties and early 'sixties with his demand that government should do everything and his refusal to grant it power to achieve anything. Since the war the British have swung from thinking their policemen god-like to thinking them all-too-human. The disadvantage of the change is that, since there have to be policemen, to take a jaundiced view of them is liable to worsen their quality and to distract them from their major purpose which is lowering the rate of crime. A certain amount of hypocrisy about standards in the public services is undoubtedly useful to the authority of the state. But we have been so determined of recent years to see the emperor naked that we have forgotten that it might be a good thing for him to wear clothes.

But if authority has ceased to reside as of right in politicians and officials, a good deal of it still adheres to the person of the expert who is deemed to bring to his decisions the resources of objective science. The exaltation of the technocrat—that new version of the cult of the "man on the spot" so dear to imperialists—is a natural consequence of a belief that there are such things as technical solutions to political problems combined with the discredit into which political authority has fallen. In his final paragraph Professor Thornton poses the question of whether Mr. Wilson and his government can restore the prestige enjoyed by the British state among its subjects—a work of renovation that implies a reassertion of the primacy of politics and the adequacy of democratic government.

The point is not an academic one. Government by consent does mean, if it is to work, that the state has the right to expect a margin of good will and civic behaviour over and above what a strict interpretation of the law requires from individual citizens. Government at all also means that in the last analysis the state must be able to act drastically against those who threaten its foundations. Both these requirements imply authority on the part of those who represent the state and an acceptance of it by the mass of citizens. Professor Thornton's intensely interesting book reveals how easy it is to dissipate this capital. The present Prime Minister will be doing the country some service if he uses his undoubted political ascendancy to build it up.

Anthony Hartley

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LETTERS

Language

ANTHONY BURGESS on modern linguistics (ENCOUNTER, May) writes like a convert trying to justify himself in a new faith. I have not myself advanced as far as he has, and I would be grateful if he could clear two difficulties from my path.

1. "Language is a flux; language is autonomous; only fools... think that they can legislate for usage." Why? One would not accept this argument in other spheres. The fact that society changes does not mean that statute law is futile. However we are asked to accept it for language. It is therefore legitimate to ask for the proof. Our language has certainly changed, but how do we know that it would not have changed quicker but for "the pedants." *"Ain't," "-in"* for *"-ing"* in present participles, and many other usages of the past would on these principles have been expected to prevail. They have not, and it seems reasonable to suppose that "the pedants" played some part at least in cheating them of their victory. If so, it may be anti-social but is not necessarily vain to "legislate for usage."

2. "The educated have long since ceased to use a genuine spoken form of the language." What does this mean? Speech is not innate, and therefore there cannot be a "natural" spoken form of a language. The only other synonym for "genuine" in the context that I can think of is "spontaneous." But the educated do speak spontaneously. Theirs is not a second language used for special occasions only. It is their everyday idiom. Moreover it seems to me wrong to deplore it. I do not believe that Dr. Johnson was "the pioneer of book-talking"—but if he was, why was he "misguided"? It is very useful to be equally intelligible in Sydney, Cape Town, London, and California, and if this is really due to "schoolmasters, clerics, and politicians," then I for one am grateful to them.

If I am wrong I should like to know the evidence that convicts me. Otherwise I shall continue —reluctantly—to believe that modern linguistics, despite the many useful discoveries that it has made, is still an anti-establishment movement rather than an objective science.

M. W. M. POPE

Department of Classics,
University of Cape Town

MY LITTLE ARTICLE on linguistics was, besides being deliberately old-fashioned in some of its doctrines, deliberately crude in some of its assertions. It was a summary for the gentile. Nevertheless, I stand by the statements cited by Mr. Pope as doubtful or inadmissible. How could a linguistic legislator hold back an unconscious process? Asking for no change, he would himself be changing. Phonetic change is—in the sense that the speaker's will is uninvolved in either encouraging it or arresting it —certainly autonomous. Nobody made *wald* become *wood* and *wold* and *weald*; no act of parliament could stop it. Mr. Pope's analogy is false. Statute law applies only to conscious, willed actions. And even if one could—in such small instances as he gives—legislate for usage, it would apply to so small a sector (those aware of language and able and willing to control it) that it would hardly be worth the enactment.

By "a genuine spoken form of the language" I mean one passed down orally and not picked up from books. Johnson knew the difference between the two when he changed his judgment of *The Rehearsal* from "It has not wit enough to keep it sweet" to "It has insufficient vitality to preserve it from putrefaction." The latter is the sort of thing that educated people prefer to say. The educated are not brought up on an oral tradition as are, say, the inhabitants of the slums; hence they have to fabricate a semi-literary tradition out of their school and university social experience. Such a tradition prefers Latinate structures and learned words to co-ordinated clauses and Anglo-Saxon roots. It may be a common *koine* for the English-speaking learned, but it has little to do with a spoken tradition—like Elizabethan pamphlet-gossip, say, or working-class pub-talk.

Mr. Pope is welcome to believe that "linguistics is an anti-establishment movement rather than an objective science," so long as he does not teach it. But to study speech as it is, not speech as the book-learned think it ought to be, is surely a legitimate activity, and the techniques of analysis cannot be other than objective. A morpheme is no more anti-establishment than a molecule.

ANTHONY BURGESS

Etchingham, Sussex

Fairlie's Press

HENRY FAIRLIE knows the value of a hard-hitting phrase that takes you by surprise. He has made a reputation as a provocative and penetrating critic of international affairs. Now, looking at world affairs from an American watch-tower, he will probably increase that reputation. But he seems to me to face the same danger as certain other journalists of picturesque emphasis. He is too ready with his sting, too ready to deal out black eyes and bloody noses.

His article in the June issue of ENCOUNTER on the British and the American Press mixes with robust commonsense some rather too robust swipes at newspapers he dislikes.

The Guardian seems to irritate him. Why does he condemn so scathingly its general style of writing and choice of news? Has it fallen away from the ideals of C. P. Scott and the brilliant men he gathered round him? I first read it in my school days when it published a superbly adequate memoir of Gladstone on his death. I have watched its ups and downs since then in sales and advertising revenue, but have noticed no decline in its ethical and cultural standards.

It has not lost the world-wide respect which C. P. Scott won for a provincial paper. In Britain its readers have increased in number, and this with no playing to the gallery under Alastair Hether-

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ington's alert editorship. It was a paper that Winston Churchill could not do without, and is obviously indispensable to many earnest politicians who study its radical idealism.

Fairlie does not appear to recognise the distinguished improvement in most of our Sunday papers, but has a lusty swipe at the *Sunday Times* and *Observer* because of their art design creations, in his view a most absurd form of packaging.

Why should artistic packaging in a paper be scorned? An over-tight, scruffy make-up does not make articles more readable. Our designers of the Sunday press make them look more attractive and give them a better chance to be read. This, at least, is my faith after many years in the business.

As a former leader writer on *The Times* Fairlie speaks with great and proper respect of its editor, Sir William Haley. But is it a fair criticism that the paper's attitudes have ceased to be consistent and therefore have ceased to be intelligible? Opinion, hotly following changes of circumstance, is itself bound to change as events unfold themselves. Who wants papers to repeat stale partisan platitudes time after time in the face of many-sided problems that present first one aspect, then another?

To our provincial papers, Fairlie offers two lessons. First, he thinks our local papers lag behind in real estate advertising and even more in supermarket advertising. This is a useful comment. Super-markets are fairly new in Britain. As they grow and compete they may well be induced to advertise freely. Our more alert provincial advertisement managers are well aware of the dramatic success in recent years of suburban newspapers in the great American cities. Local papers of this kind may spring up here.

Secondly, Fairlie holds up for emulation the American conception of the community newspaper. Our provincial morning papers are not one-city and therefore not one-community papers. They serve their regions. But most of our evening papers and many of our weekly papers, not going far away with their mass sales, serve their communities exceedingly well.

Fairlie would like more inquisitive local political reporting. So would I. Nothing is more important in a journalist's equipment than ceaseless critical curiosity among the many changes in our midst. That is a cardinal rule in our Press training curricula. I believe British newspaper owners and journalists are not as slow and slack as our critic seems to think.

SIR LINTON ANDREWS

Leeds

Giant Seminar

I WRITE as one of the "hungry sheep," who aroused the pity of *R* in his Column [ENCOUNTER, July]. I attended, as a passive observer, the giant seminar at the LSE on the One-party State. I was unable to attend all of it, but though I had to leave in the middle of it, I returned—eagerly. In fairness to the active participants derided by *R*, and speaking as a passive and hence disinterested sheep, I wish to put on record that *R*'s compassion for me at any rate was misplaced, for I did *not* go hungry.

Of course, the column was *amusing*, and in that sense, exaggerated. When the piece itself goes out of its way to confess exaggeration, the normal rules of literary discounting lead one to conclude that its connection with truth is minimal, especially when the amusing and imaginative sketches also serve as pretexts for further reflections about the tutorial system, which otherwise would hang in the air.

Still, I'm a bit worried, not by the possibility that *R* is describing an imaginary seminar, but by the somewhat smaller possibility that he is describing the real one, and that the difference lies not in the facts reported, but in the standards applied to them.

Academic life in this country once had its own and somewhat premature "end of ideology," before the officially announced one. It didn't even have a name, though some people muttered about the death of political theory. But it preferred not to advertise. Its premiss was that general thought—hence also social thought—was a mistake. Hence the ideological *status quo* was just fine, though to spell out this conclusion would have meant stressing that there *was* such a status quo, and this, it was felt, was better left unsaid.

But there were some people who still had to do some social theorising, because, for instance, they were contractually bound to do so by their posts. They had a number of ways out, such as pedantry and scholasticism, or on the other hand the assimilation of social thought to after-dinner speaking.

Clearly *R* does not hanker after the former alternatives. I wish I were as sure that he does not hanker after the latter. The seminar he attended (as a guest) and which he derides, is, like similar activities, a sign of changed times. Does *R* wish to set back the clock? This sheep found the seminar satisfying fare, though he does remember some lean times.

ERNEST GELLNER

Old Litten Cottage,
Froxfield,
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Czech Liberals

FRANÇOIS BONDY's "Letter from Prague" [ENCOUNTER, July] contains one puzzling statement. He would like your readers to believe that in Czechoslovakia "in 1947 there was no 'liberal' or 'western' youth; too much had happened to rob them of that faith, and many of the best were convinced Communists." No evidence is given for this assertion and one wonders if Mr. Bondy had not been sold a bit of propaganda in 1947 during his stay at Dobříš Castle.

The facts are that in Czech Universities up to 25 February 1948 there were as many, if not more, "liberal" or "western" students as Communists. This is why there had to be "purges" in the various student bodies after the seizure of power. It is a fact, too, that the British Institutes in Prague and Brno flourished and were supported by young people. The study of English and French was more popular among young Czechs than that of Rus-

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sian. Students in Prague demonstrated at the time of the *coup d'état* against the C.P. machinations. After February 1948, thousands of young Czechs left the country in protest against the present régime and in order to work (if possible) for something different and better.

There was "liberal" or "western" youth in Czechoslovakia in 1947, but it was not organised (or was too poorly organised) to meet the Communist challenge. Nor was it supported by ruthless and militant politicians in the country and the threat of the use of tanks from the outside. They had not been "robbed of any faith" since democracy was not for them anything like religious faith. Anyhow, they could see well enough that the failure of some Western politicians in 1938 did not touch the ideals or the principles which inspired Thomas Masaryk.

There were young Communists in 1947. They were numerous but not any more than those who refused to jump on the Communist band-wagon. Were the Communists from among "the best"? If one judges by nothing more than what Bondy says about the Czechoslovakia which these Communists have created one may doubt this.

L. C. VELECKY

College of Air Training,
Hamble, Southampton

Teaching Machines

I FOUND H. J. Eysenck's article on teaching machines and their history [ENCOUNTER, May] to be an insufficient answer to his questions on how to overcome a vicious circle of poor conditions and poor methods. Does it make sense to say that a teacher should leave factual drudgery to a machine since he needs time for interesting material? Is not factual "drudgery" the basis of education insofar as it is material open to use and interpretation and insofar as uses and interpretations usually come at the time of first impression? If the substance of teaching is drudgery, does this not reflect the state of teaching rather than the materials?

I do not feel that most people share Dr. Eysenck's opinion that boredom is so essential to education that it should be institutionalised in a machine. And if the teaching methods are at fault then it is time to take a look at such factors as American schools of education. Here teachers are often produced to be machine bored, bound by inapplicable maxims of correct behaviour and petty coercive methods for ingenuity and non-conformist taste. Mr. Eysenck has not put forth a new proposal for avoiding poor education. He has only stated the very mental process which is currently ruining American teachers and stifling American students. Now, we will be watching how this mental process becomes programmed in the name of new science.

If Dr. Eysenck were to attempt a qualitative rather than a quantitative proposal, and not simply substitute drudgery for drudgery in the machine world, then he would have something new to tell.

RALPH MENDERSHAUSEN

Berkeley, California

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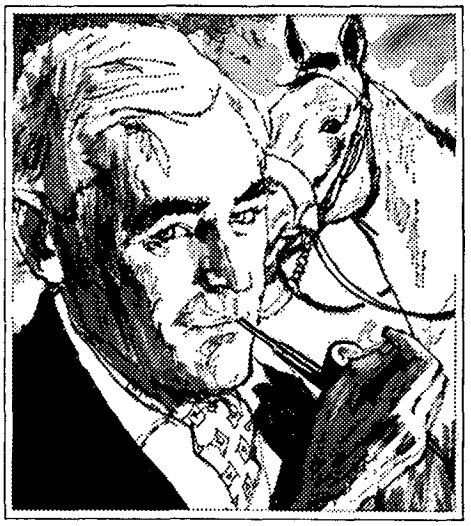

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Seymour Martin Lipset, born in New York City in 1922, is Professor of Government and Social Relations at Harvard. His books include *Political Man* (1960), and *The First New Nation* (1964). . . .

Lord Chalfont (formerly Alun Gwynne Jones) was born in South Wales in 1919. He resigned his commission in the Army in 1961 to become Defence Correspondent to *The Times*. Created a life peer in 1964 and appointed Minister of State for Foreign Affairs with Special Responsibilities for Disarmament, he leads the British delegation at the 18 Nation Disarmament Committee in Geneva. His article is based on lectures given in Austria this summer at the Klesheim and Alpbach seminars. . . .

Francis Hope, born 1938, was educated at Eton and Oxford. He is a Fellow of All Souls, and has published a book of poems, *Instead of a Poet* (1965). He was an assistant editor of both ENCOUNTER and the *New Statesman,* and has spent the last year studying and travelling in the United States. His essay will appear in a symposium entitled *The Left,* edited by Gerald Kaufman, to be published by Anthony Blond. . . .

D. J. Gordon, who is Professor of English at the University of Reading, has written on the Italian theatre, on Renaissance literature, and on the literature of the Irish revival. . . .

Frances Yates is Reader in the History of the Renaissance at the Warburg Institute and among her books is the recently published *The Art of Memory* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966). . . .

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